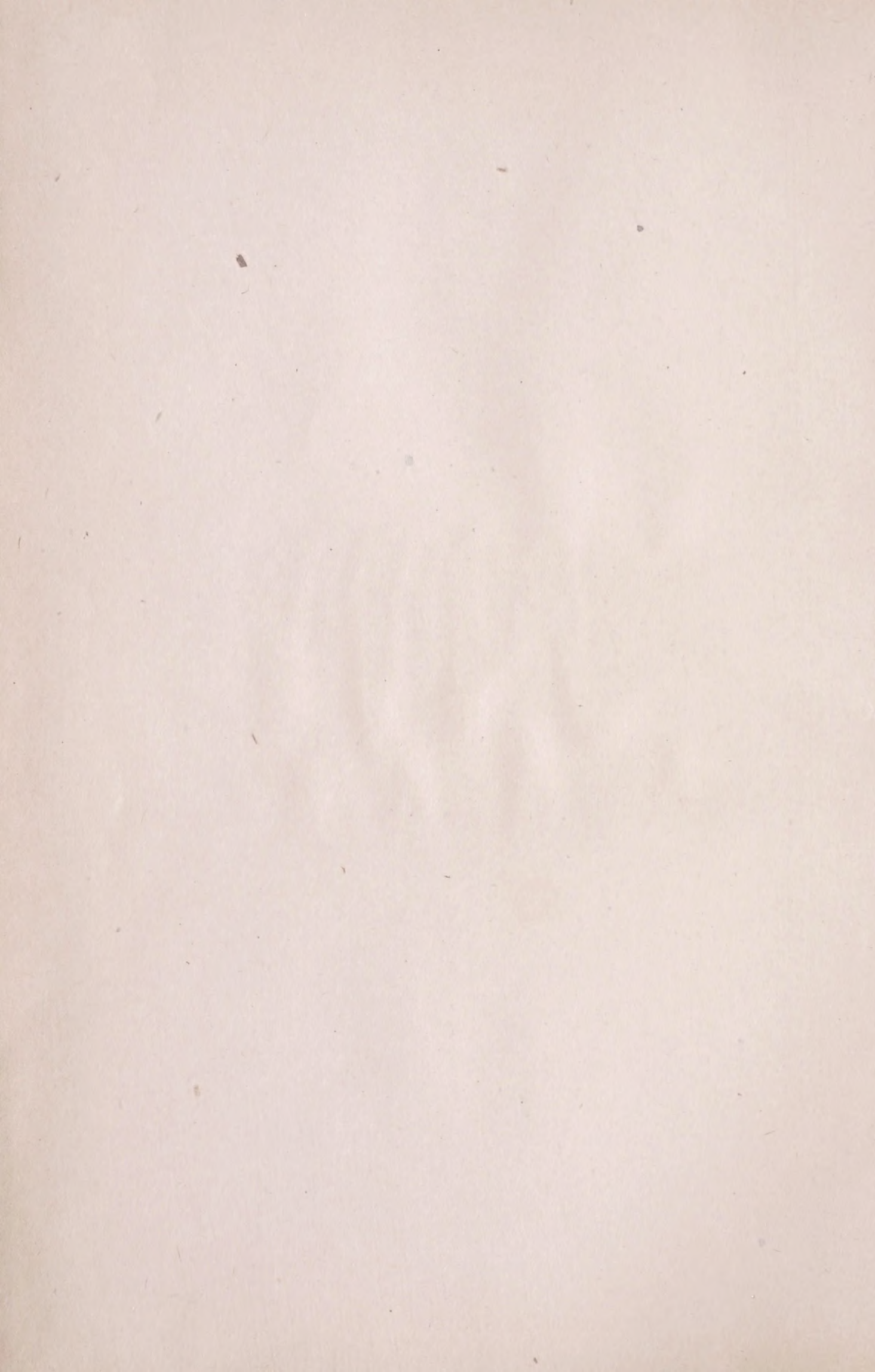


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BEAUTIFUL BUT POOR.

A Novel, by JULIA EDWARDS, Author of

"PRETTIEST OF ALL," AND "THE LITTLE WIDOW."



NEW YORK :
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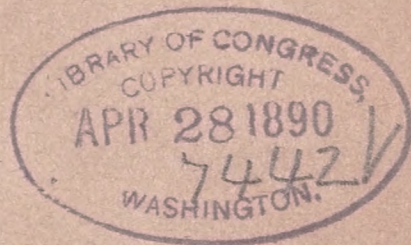
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BEAUTIFUL BUT POOR.

BY



JULIA EDWARDS,

Coryell, John Russell

AUTHOR OF

"Prettiest of All," "The Little Widow," Etc.

NEW YORK:

STREET & SMITH, Publishers,

31 Rose Street.

1890

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BEAUTIFUL BUT POOR.

CHAPTER I.

HATTIE'S LETTER.

Fancy a dingy old brick house on B—— street, New York city—dusty outside and moldy in all its ragged, papered walls inside—a dreary house with small, poorly ventilated rooms—these rooms wretchedly furnished, and I have made you at home in “Miss Scrimp’s Boarding-House for ladies only—no gentlemen boarded, lodged, or admitted.”

For this was the inscription on a faded tin sign nailed over the front door.

And in this building existed—I will not say lived—most of the time, between thirty and fifty working girls, attracted there by the cheapness of board, which enabled them to make ends meet on the wretched wages due to “hard times,” or hard-hearted employers, or perhaps to a medium between the two.

Miss Scrimp, a maiden lady, who acknowledged herself to be forty-five—one of the oldest boarders said that had been her age for over ten years—only charged four dollars a week for boarders in her best, lower rooms, and it ran as low as two dollars and a

half in the upper story, and two attic chambers—for this was a four-story house. She had but two servants—one to cook, wash, and iron, the other a pitiful, thin little creature, as errand girl, waitress, maid of all work, and all work it was for her, from early dawn till far into the night. She did all the sweeping, set out the table, helped to wash and wipe dishes, carried Miss Scrimp's market-basket, went to the grocery, cleaned and lighted lamps—indeed, did almost everything that had to be done outside of the kitchen, and bore the abuse of Biddy Lanigan, the cook, and that of her mistress, like a little martyr, as she in truth was.

Little Jess they called her—her full name was Jessie Albemarle—was as good as she could be to all around her, no matter how she was treated, but there was one young girl in that house whom she almost worshiped—first, because Hattie Butler was very good to her; next, because Hattie was really the most beautiful creature she had ever seen on earth.

Though Hattie lodged in the very topmost room of the house, when she came home weary from her daily toil she would find her room swept as clean as clean could be, fresh water in her pitcher, and often a bouquet of flowers, picked up at market or elsewhere, perfuming the little room. And she knew Little Jess had done all this for the love there was between them.

Hattie, I said before, was very beautiful. Just seventeen, and entering on her eighteenth year, her form was full of that slender grace so peculiar to budding womanhood—just tall enough to pass the medium, without being an approach to awkwardness. Eyes of a jet, sparkling black, shaded by

long, fringe-like lashes, features of the Grecian type, complexion rich, but not too brown, the expressiveness of her face a very marvel.

No one, to look at her white hands, her slim, tapering fingers, her general appearance, even in her plain dress, would have, at first glance, taken her for a working girl, though she sewed folios in a book-bindery down town for ten hours every day sure, and often much longer when there was over-work to do.

She was a quiet girl, making but few friends, and no intimates, though when I write of her she had been for nearly two years a boarder with Miss Scrimp. The latter, for a wonder, liked her, though, as a general thing, she seemed to hate pretty girls, simply because they were pretty; while she had most likely kept her state of single wretchedness because she was more than plain—she was ugly. She had a sharp, hook nose—a parrot-bill nose, if we dare insult the bird by a comparison. She was cross-eyed, and her eyes were small and greenish-gray in hue. Her cheek bones were high, her chin long and sharp. Her thin lips opened almost from ear to ear, and in her dirty morning gown, slopping around, her form looked like an old coffee-bag, half filled with paper scraps, perambulating about over a pair of old slippers—number sevens if an inch.

But Miss Scrimp really liked Hattie Butler, beautiful as she was, and this was the reason:

At supper-time, before she ate a mouthful, every Saturday night Hattie laid her board money, two dollars and a half, down at the head of the table where Miss Scrimp presided. It had been her habit ever since she came; it was a good example to others, though all did not follow it.

Again, Hattie ate what was placed before her, and never grumbled. She never found hairs in the rancid butter; or, if she did, she kept it to herself. If her bread was dry and hard she soaked it in her tea or coffee, but did not turn her nose up as others did, and threaten to go away if Miss Scrimp did not set a better table.

And, best of all, Hattie was a light eater, as Miss Scrimp often said, in hearing of her other boarders, too sensible to hurt her complexion by using too much greasy food.

Some of the homelier girls sometimes used the old "gag," if I may use a story term, and said "she lived on love;" yet the dozen or more who worked in the same bindery with her never saw her receive attentions from any man—never saw any person approach her in a lover-like way.

Her only fault to all who knew her was that there was a mystery about her.

That she was a born lady, her manners, her quiet, dignified way, her brief conversation, ever couched in unexceptionable language, told plainly. But she never told any one about herself. She never spoke of parents or relatives—never alluded to past fortunes. But Little Jess used to look in wonder at a shelf of books in Hattie's room. There were books in French, German, and Spanish, and on Sundays, when she sometimes stole up stairs to see her favorite among all the boarders, she found her reading these books. And she had a large portfolio of drawings, and at times she added to them with a skillful pencil.

One thing was certain. Hattie was very poor—she had no income beyond that gained by her daily labor. She washed her own clothes, and, by per-

mission of Biddy Lanigan, ironed them on Saturday evenings in the kitchen, for she had even a kind word for Biddy, and kind words are almost as precious as gold to the poor.

Hattie seldom was able to earn over four dollars a week, as wages ran, and thus she had but little to use for dress, though she was ever dressed with exceeding taste, plain though her garments were. These she cut and made, buying the patterns and goods only.

When she had overwork she made more, and she had been seen with a bank-book in her hand, so it was evident she had saved something to help along with should sickness overtake her.

She had been two years and one week boarding at Miss Scrimp's, when one Thursday the postman, or mail-carrier, rather, delivered a letter at the door directed to her.

Hattie was down at the bindery then, and Jessie Albemarle, answering the bell, got the letter. She would have kept it till Hattie came, but her mistress demanded to see it, and took charge of it.

Little Jess had seen that it was a large letter, postmarked from somewhere in California, and that it had a singular seal in wax on the back. The impression represented two hearts pierced with an arrow.

The address was only the name, street, number, and city.

Miss Scrimp looked at it very closely. Had there been no seal, only gum as a closing medium, it is possible her examination might have been closer.

Biddy Lanigan, once when she quarreled with her mistress and employer, boldly twitted her with hav-

ing "stamed" letters over her "tay-kettle" and then opened them.

"This is a man's handwrite!" muttered Miss Scrimp. "I don't like my boarders having men to write to 'em. But this one is away off in Californy—like as not, rich as all creation. I wish I knew who he is and what he wants. I'll hand her the letter afore all the boarders at supper to-night, and if she opens it, I'll watch her face, and maybe I can guess from that what's up. She'll never tell no other way. She has just the closest little mouth I ever did see. But come to think, she mightn't open it at the table. She wouldn't be apt to, for all the girls would be curious to know if it was a love-letter, and plague her, maybe. And she is too good a girl to be plagued. I'll keep it till after she has had supper and gone to her room, and then I'll go up, friendly-like, and take a chair—if there's two in her room, which I'm not sure of—hand her the letter, and wait till she opens it. And I'll ask her if her brother in Californy is well—make as if some one had told me she had a brother there."

This plan, talked over to herself, satisfied Miss Scrimp, and she put the letter in one of her capacious pockets, there to remain till evening.

CHAPTER II.

MISS SCRIMP'S DISAPPOINTMENT.

The cracked bell, which had done service all those long years in the establishment of Miss Scrimp, had rung its discordant call for supper. The hour was late, for many of her boarders worked till dark, and had some distance to walk to reach home, and the dining-room was dimly lighted by two hanging lamps, one over each end of the table. They served, however, to show the scattered array of thin sliced bread, still thinner slices of cold meat, and the small plates of very pale butter laid along at distant intervals. Also to show dimly a few rosy faces, but many worn and pale ones—almost all having, like Cassius, “a lean and hungry look.”

The rosy faces were new-comers, who had left good country homes to learn sad lessons in city life.

Little Jessie was hurrying to and fro, carrying the cups of hot beverage, which her mistress called tea, to the boarders, and answering the impatient cries of those not yet served as fast as she could.

Biddy Lanigan, who stood almost six feet high, was fleshy to boot, and had a face almost as red as the coals she worked over, stood with her arms akimbo at the door, which opened into the kitchen, ready for a bitter answer should any fault-finder's voice reach her ear, and also prepared to refill the tea-urn with hot water when it ran low, on the principle that a second cup of tea should never be as strong as the first.

There was a murmur of many voices at first, but

the clatter of knives and forks, and cups and saucers soon drowned all this, and until the dishes were literally emptied, little other noise could be heard.

Long before the rest were done sweet Hattie Butler had finished her single slice of bread and butter, one cracker and a cup of tea, and gone to her room. Grim and silent, yet keenly overlooking the appetite of each boarder, sat Miss Scrimp, until all were through, and had gone to their rooms, or into the old dingy room, slanderously called a parlor, to chat awhile before retiring.

Then Biddy Lanigan came in with two extra cups of strong tea, one for the mistress, the other for herself—a plate of baked potatoes and a couple of nice chops.

Poor Jessie Albemarle had her supper to make from the little—the very little the hungry boarders had left.

Miss Scrimp was not long at the table. She was burning with curiosity about the letter in her pocket, and so she took a small lamp in her hand and threaded her way up the steep, narrow, uncarpeted stairs to the attic where our heroine lodged.

Knocking at the door, it was opened by Hattie quickly, who, with her wealth of jet-black hair, glossy as silk, all let down over her shoulders, looked, if possible, tenfold more beautiful than she had below, with her hair neatly bound up so as not to be in the way when she was at her work.

Hattie had been reading, for on her little stand, near the bed, was a lamp and an open book.

There were not two chairs in the room, but Hattie proffered her only one to Miss Scrimp, and waited to learn the cause of this unexpected visit, for Miss Scrimp never called on a boarder without she was

behind hand in her board, and then her calls were not visits of compliment or pleasure either.

"I do declare—only one chair here, Miss Hattie? It's a shame—I'll rate Jess soundly for her neglect!" said Miss Scrimp, looking around as if she did not know how poorly the room was furnished.

"Do not scold her, Miss Scrimp. I do not need but one chair—I never have any company to occupy another. Sit down—I will sit on my bed as I often do."

"Well—thankee, I will sit down, for it is tiresome coming up those long stairs. I came up to tell you I had a letter for you the letter-carrier left to-day. I didn't want to give it to you down at table, for them giddy girls are always noticing everything, and they might have thought it was a love-letter, and tried to tease you. Here it is."

"Thank you, Miss Scrimp, you were very considerate," said Hattie, gently, as she received the letter, looked calmly at the superscription, and then opened it at the end of the envelope with a dainty little pearl-handled knife.

Miss Scrimp watched every shade on Hattie's face as the girl read the letter. There was an eager look in her eyes as they scanned the first few lines, then a sudden pallor, and it was followed by a tremulous flush that suffused brow, cheeks, and even her neck.

In spite of an apparent endeavor to keep calm, Hattie was to some extent agitated. She knew that those cross-eyes were fixed upon her, and she did not intend, if she had a secret, to share it with the owner of them.

In a very short time the letter was read and restored to its envelope, and now Miss Scrimp thought

it time to try the plan she had formed for finding out who had written to her favorite boarder.

"Hope you've good news from your brother, Miss Hattie," she said. "I heard some one say you had a brother in Californy. Hope he is doin' well. It's an awful country for gettin' rich in, I've heard say."

"My letter brings me very pleasant news, Miss Scrimp. I thank you again for the trouble you took to bring it up to me. You are always kind to me."

"I ought to be, dear. I haven't another boarder in this house, out of forty-three all told now, who is as punctual and so little trouble as you. And you can tell your brother so when you write to him."

"When I do write to my brother I will surely mention you, Miss Scrimp," said Hattie, with an amused smile.

For, with quick intuition, she saw the aim of the curious woman.

"You didn't say if he was doing well?" continued Miss Scrimp, determined to get some information.

"The letter only refers to business of mine—not to that of any one else," said Hattie, gently but firmly.

"You'll not answer it now, will you? I might mail it early, you know, when I go out for milk, for I'm first up in the house."

"I shall not answer it to-night, Miss Scrimp. I am very tired, and am going right to bed. I thank you for your kind offer as much as if I accepted it."

Beaten at every point, and so gently and graciously that she could not take offense, Miss Scrimp took up her lamp with a sigh, and said:

"Poor, dear thing, I know you must be tired. If your brother is getting rich, as he must be, there in that land of silver and gold, I should think he'd send for you to go to him."

“Good-night, kind Miss Scrimp—good-night,” was all that Hattie answered, as she made a motion toward preparing for bed.

“Good-night, dear—good-night,” said Miss Scrimp, a little snappishly, for she had made that long, up-stair journey for nothing.

The door closed, and poor Hattie was alone.

And tears came into her eyes now, and she knelt down and prayed.

“Heavenly Father, aid me and tell me what to do.”

CHAPTER III.

THE FOREMAN'S DISCOVERY.

The bindery in which Hattie Butler, with over one hundred other persons, male and female, worked, was famous for doing very fine private work, outside of that done for many publishers who had their work contracted for there. Gentlemen of wealth and taste, who had rare old works in worn-out covers, and wished them preserved in more stately dress, frequently brought them there for the purpose of outer renovation.

So it happened that on the very morning which succeeded the night when Hattie received the California letter, a fine equipage, from far up town, stopped in the narrow street which fronted the bindery, and an elderly, old-fashioned gentleman got out and toiled up the stairs to the bindery floor with a bundle of some size under one arm.

He was met, quite obsequiously, by Mr. W——, one of the proprietors, who knew, by past experience, that some nice, well-paying work was in view, and asked into the office.

"No, no, I am in a hurry," said the old gentleman. "I want to see your foreman—I have some French and German reviews here—old and rare—which are all to pieces and somewhat mixed up. I bought them at an auction—a regular old book-worm once owned them, but he died, and his graceless heirs sold off the collection of years for a mere song, compared to their real value. I wish these properly collated, and bound nicely for my library."

"The foreman will wait upon you, Mr. Legare, in a few moments," said the proprietor. "Take a seat by this table."

The man of wealth sat down, and Mr. W—— sent a boy after the foreman.

The latter came and looked over the mixed up and scattered pages with a perplexed look.

"I'm afraid you can do nothing with them," said Mr. Legare, noticing the expression in the foreman's face. "I am sorry, for I doubt if a second copy of either work can be found in this city, or indeed in America."

"Try, Mr. Jones—try your very best," said Mr. W——, anxiously.

"I think we can do it, sir," said the foreman, brightening up. "I accidentally discovered that one of our girls, Hattie Butler, is a good linguist—reads German and French as well as she does English—one of our best and most quiet girls, too."

"Send for her, please," said Mr. Legare. "I do so want to preserve these works in good shape."

And presently Hattie Butler stood before the trio—one of her employers, Mr. Legare, and the foreman—calm and lady-like, neat in her white apron and brown calico dress, her black hair wound in a queenly crown about her shapely head.

"Hattie, see what can be done with these old reviews," said the foreman, with the familiar, bossy style peculiar to too many of his class.

The young girl took up the French work, and instantly said:

"This is very old. A French review of Dante's 'Inferno.' Some pages, I see, are misplaced; but if all are here, sir, I can soon arrange them."

Mr. W—— looked at Mr. Legare triumphantly.

"The German work—can you arrange that also, young lady?" asked Mr. Legare, looking in wonder at this beautiful girl, so young, working here, yet evidently a scholar.

Hattie took up the other review, glanced over the pages, and replied:

"Yes, sir. I see that this is a bitter attack on Martin Luther, and must date with the first ages of the Protestant Reformation."

"Great Heaven! why, young lady, what are you doing here with such an education?"

"Working, sir, as thousands do in this great city and elsewhere, for my daily bread."

"Sewing folios at the bench, and we have no better in the shop," added the foreman.

"Do you understand any other languages?" asked the wondering man of wealth.

"Italian and Spanish, sir. I was taught by my mother, who was not only a fine linguist, but had traveled a great deal in the countries where these various languages are spoken. I was born in Italy."

"Yet of American parentage?"

"Yes, sir."

"This is no place for you, young lady. Your education should place you in a far higher sphere."

"Excuse me, sir. Shall I at once go to work to arrange these pages? I will sew them myself when I have them all right, so there will be no mistake."

"Yes—yes—thank you. I will reward you well," said Mr. Legare, with unusual warmth, for he was a very steady, precise old gentleman, generally, in all things.

"Thank you, sir; all pay and emoluments must go to my employers. I receive my wages—no more."

And Hattie, with a graceful bow, took up the scattered pages, and went to her work-bench.

“W——, who on earth is this prodigy? The mistress of five languages—for she speaks English perfectly, and as pretty and lady-like as any woman that I ever met.”

The proprietor almost blushed when he said:

“My dear Mr. Legare, she has worked here, I believe, for nearly two years, at the same bench, and until to-day I never knew her acquirements. I have often noticed her beauty and extreme modesty, for she has avoided all intimacies in the shop, but nothing beyond this has attracted my notice. I never make myself familiar with my hands—seldom speak to them, except through the foreman. I am as much surprised as you at this discovery, and shall promote the girl at once, and increase her wages. Our work has increased so much—private work, like yours, that as a collator, translator, and arranger, she will have enough to do nearly all the time. Mr. Jones, you can so inform her, and prepare a table in some quiet part of the shop, where there is little noise, and she will not be disturbed.”

The foreman turned away with a bow of acquiescence, but was recalled to receive directions as to the style of binding required by Mr. Legare for the new works.

“This young lady—Miss Butler, I believe, is her name—will tell you what titles to put on the backs, and be sure to have the original dates of the issue of works there also. I am very particular about that.”

“I know it, sir, and we will be very careful,” said the foreman.

And when the man of wealth and influence turned to leave, Mr. W—— went down the stairs with him,

and saw him into his carriage, and stood bare-headed on the sidewalk until he had driven away.

And this is Republican, Democratic America!

No kings, nor dukes, nor lords here—but to the sovereignty of wealth the reddest or blackest republican, or the noisiest democrat, bends his servile knee and cowering head more abjectly than any serf in Russia bows before the imperial form.

Independence! Bah! 'Tis but a name!

CHAPTER IV.

TEA-TABLE TALK.

There was a regular flutter in the boarding-house of Miss Scrimp when the bindery girls got in that Friday evening; for they brought the news that Hattie Butler had been promoted in the bindery, a new position given her, and her wages raised to ten dollars a week. Some of the girls were really glad, for Hattie had ever been so gentle, so quiet, so kind when any of them were sick, that she had few enemies. But others were envious of her good fortune, as they ever had been of her beauty, so there were a few to sneer and hint that Mr. Jones, the foreman, or Mr. W——, one of the proprietors, had only promoted her because she was handsome, and they wanted her off by herself where they could talk to her and say things the other girls couldn't hear.

The object of the flutter, the laudation, and the envy, seemed all this time to care the least for her promotion of any that knew it. She did not speak of it, even to Miss Scrimp, at whose right hand her chair at table was always placed; but the latter had heard of it before Hattie got home, and was ready with her congratulations the instant Hattie sat down.

"I'm awful glad to hear you've been set up in the bindery, and get so much better wages, dear," she said.

And she screwed her sallow cheeks and thin lips into a picture of a smile which Nast would glory to copy, if he could only have seen it.

"Thank you, Miss Scrimp; but I do not know as it

will be much better for me. My former work was very easy. It only exercised my fingers. This will tax both fingers and brain. My head aches over it already."

"Dear, dear! Well, I'll have Biddy Lanigan make you a real strong cup of tea and some toast."

"No, thank you, Miss Scrimp, I do not wish it. The food which is good enough for the rest always satisfies me."

"I know it, dear. You never find fault, and that makes me so much the more ready to better your fare when I can. And that reminds me—Miss Dolhear has got sick and gone home to the country; she that came here, poor thing, to learn dress-making; and her room, on the second floor, front, is empty now, and you shall have it for only one dollar more than you pay now, though I charged her two. Her folks were well off; they used to write and send her money, and I guess she got sick a-eatin' too much cake and candy. Her room is all stuck up with it. But I'll have Little Jess clean it out for you, if you'll take it."

"Thank you, Miss Scrimp, I do not wish to change. I feel very much at home in my little chamber, and the higher one gets in the city the purer is the air they breathe."

"Dear, dear! I thought you'd like to change. But you know what you like best. Do let me call Biddy and have some toast made for you."

"No, thank you, Miss Scrimp. There is plenty before me, I am sure."

"Dear! dear! That's just your own nice way always. I never heard a complaint from your lips, and there's some that are never satisfied."

And here Miss Scrimp sent a scornful, cross eyed

glance down the table. But no one could tell exactly at whom she was looking, so the look didn't hurt anybody.

As Hattie made no further remark, the usual clatter of knives and forks on slenderly-filled plates was alone heard for a time.

But when Hattie, as usual, arose earliest of all, and went to her room, quite an unusual rush of conversation, and all about her, commenced.

"Such luck! From four dollars a week to ten, and all because she can talk Dutch!" said one—a very plain and a very ignorant girl.

"Ten dollars? How she'll shine out in silk on Sundays, I'll bet, and look for a beau as fast as the best of us," said another. "She couldn't do it in ten-cent calico. Oh, no, the proud thing!"

"She is not a girl of that kind," cried another, warmly. "She is the prettiest girl in this house tonight, and you all know it."

"Yes, stick up for her, Sally Perkins. We know why. When you had the measles so bad she lost three days work sitting up with you and waiting on you."

"Thank Heaven she did," cried Sally, earnestly. "I might have died before one of you would have done as much for me. She is a living angel if ever there was one. So there now. I'll never speak to a girl that breathes a word against her so long as I live."

"Good for Sally Perkins," cried a dozen in a breath, for more than one in that crowd of girls had received kindness from Hattie Butler when kindness was so much needed.

And the battle of tongues grew less and less, and soon tea was over, and the girls scattered as usual.

Some to their rooms, weary enough to go right to rest—others to linger a little while in the old parlor and get others to fix up their scanty wardrobe so as to be ready for their only day of rest or pleasure—the blessed Sunday so near at hand—but one day of toil to intervene.

Our heroine—where was she? In her little chamber thanking her Heavenly Father that at last the stern strife for daily bread was made easier to her, and that a glimmer of light could be seen through the dark clouds of poverty.

Pure-hearted and innocent, she did not dream that any one could so envy her good fortune as to hate her for it. If she had she would have prayed God to forgive them.

CHAPTER V.

DOES HE LOVE HER?

Mr. W——, one of the proprietors of the bindery where our heroine worked—a junior partner, but the chief manager of the concern, was a single man, not yet forty, in the very prime of life. He was, as a man, not as a fop, very good-looking. His stalwart frame, well-developed, showed his American birth; but his full, round, rosy face spoke also of his English paternity. He had thus far in life been too busy to think of matrimony, and, living with his parents, who were in easy circumstances, he had never known the want of a home, or the need of a wife to make home bright. His sisters, of whom he had two, considerably younger than himself, had ever seen to his linen—his tailor looked to his wardrobe—he had little to trouble himself about. He belonged to a coterie or club of bachelors, and was never at a loss about a place to spend his evenings in.

But that day, when the wealthy and influential Mr. Legare had told Hattie Butler that she deserved to be in a higher sphere, had opened Mr. W——'s eyes—opened them to the wonderful beauty as well as the surprising talent of the girl who had worked at low wages without a murmur for over two years in his shop.

He had noticed her quiet modesty in contrast with the boldness of other girls often before, but that very shrinking modesty had also kept her beauty in the background.

And that very afternoon he had taken occasion in

person to look at her work, as her slim, tapering fingers gathered up missing pages and placed them where they belonged; and he asked her many questions, in a kinder tone than he was accustomed to use to his employees; for there was to him a very sweet music in the voice that answered his queries.

And when he went home that evening he was strangely absent-minded. When his Sister Flotie asked him if he would not get opera tickets and take her and Anna to hear "Lucia" on the Monday night following, he said:

"Yes, Miss Hattie—yes; with pleasure."

"Hattie? Who is Hattie, brother, that you should use that name instead of Flotie, when you answer me?"

"Did I? I didn't mean to; but I am full of Hattie some way. I went to write a letter to our paper manufacturer, and had got a dozen lines written, when I saw I had headed it, 'Dear Hattie.' There is a girl in the bindery of that name—a most remarkable girl. I will tell you all I know about her. She looks and acts like a princess in disguise."

And then Mr. W—— gave a very highly colored description of our heroine and her acquirements.

"And you have let this prodigy of beauty and learning, of modesty and goodness, work for you for two years at little better than starvation wages? Coward! I'm ashamed of you, if you are my brother," cried Flotie, warmly.

"Sis, don't break out that way. We pay the usual rates. Were we to pay higher, we could not compete with other binderies and keep up."

"But four dollars a week to pay board and washing, and dress with! Why, it wouldn't keep me in gloves."

"Yet thousands of poor girls work for and live on less, my peerless sister. You, who know no want that is not supplied almost as soon as expressed, know little how poor girls and women have to struggle to keep their heads above the tide. But my heroine is better off now. I have given her other work, and raised her salary to ten dollars a week."

"Good! good! You have some heart after all, Ned."

"I begin to think I have," said Mr. W——, with a sigh.

"Here! here! No nonsense, brother mine. Don't make a fool of yourself by falling in love with your pretty employee. She may be very pretty, very modest, and good, but I don't want a bindery girl for a sister-in-law. Remember that."

Mr. W—'s answer was another sigh. He seemed lost in thought, and, as he had promised the opera tickets, Flotie left him to his thoughts, and went to tell Anna about her brother's new discovery, as well as to announce that they were to hear "Lucia" on the coming Monday night.

"Do you think Brother Edward is really in love with this shop-girl?" asked Anna, in a serious tone, when Flotie had told her story.

"I think he is a little smitten, but seriously in love—no. Not a bit of it. Edward is too much engrossed in business to fall in love in good earnest. He hasn't leisure for that. Besides, he has too much sense to ever think of marrying for beauty, and out of his own sphere, too. There are rich girls who would snap at him for the asking."

"Flotie, love—real love—laughs at riches."

"May be so, Anna; but love—real love, as you call it—never—scorns a diamond engagement-ring,

nor refuses to wear satin and Valenciennes lace for a wedding suit. Where would the bindery girl on four, or even ten dollars a week, find them?"

"Ned would find them for her fast enough, if he loved her. But say, Flotie, what will we wear on Monday night? That is the question for the hour. You know the *creme de la creme* of society will be there, and we must uphold the family credit."

"Yes, even if papa heaves a heavy sigh over our demands. Let me think. We'll go up stairs and look over our wardrobe, see what we have, and then we'll know what we must have. Come, pet."

And away went the two loving sisters—girls yet, though both were past their teens.

CHAPTER VI.

JOY TO TOIL-WORN HEARTS.

Mr. Legare, after leaving the bindery, drove, or was taken in his carriage, to a prominent bank, in which he was heavily interested, both as a stockholder and depositor, transacted some business there, then took a turn down Wall street to look into some stocks there, and returned home just in time for lunch.

He was met at the table by his two children—Frank, a son of five-and-twenty years, and Lizzie, a daughter just five years younger. His wife, their mother, had passed away two years before, leaving sweet memories only to cheer their saddened hearts, for as wife and mother she had been a treasure on earth.

“Well, children, how have you spent your morning?” asked the fond and ever indulgent father.

“I have been over in Forty-Fifth street, father, calling on your old friend, Mr. —,” said Frank. “I love to visit the dear old fellow, and to hear him talk of his travels in Europe. He is droll, yet there is a vein of true philosophy in all he says. And his sketches of scenes he visited are so full of life and interest. An invalid, yet so cheerful—it would cure a misanthrope to visit him once in a while.”

“He is a good man, Frank, and I am glad you like to visit him. He has seen much of the world, and you can learn a great deal in conversing with him. And now, daughter, dear, how have you spent your afternoon?”

“I started out to go a-shopping, papa. You know

you handed me a roll of money last night for that purpose. I went on foot, for I like exercise on a sunny morning like this. Only a little way from here, in front of the drug store on the next avenue, I saw a young girl, a mere child of ten or eleven years, crying bitterly. I asked her what was the matter, and learned, through her many sobs, that she had come with only seven cents, the last money she or her mother had in the world, to get medicine for that mother, who was sick. The medicine named in the prescription cost twenty cents, and the druggist would not let her have it without the money. I took the poor thing by the hand and went in and got the medicine for her, and in the meantime found out where she lived, in an alley only four blocks, dear father, from this rich home, in the basement of one of the old tumble-down houses, which are a disgrace to the city. I don't know but I did wrong, papa, but I couldn't help it. I went home with that little girl and saw her poor mother, sick, with four children, actually starving, in an unfurnished cellar—no food, no fire—nothing but want and wretchedness to meet my view. Father, there is a fire there now, and plenty to eat. The sick woman is on a good bed, our doctor has taken her case in hand, and the children, in decent clothes, will go to school next week. But I have not been shopping. I found better use for my money."

"God bless my girl—my noble girl," said Mr. Legare, and tears came in his eyes as he spoke. "Frank, my boy, Lizzie has outstripped us both in good works, though we both may have done some good; you in visiting and cheering up my invalid friend, and I—well, I, too, have had an adventure, and perhaps have been the indirect cause of better

ing the condition of a poor, hard-working girl—the loveliest creature, by the way, that I ever saw, at home or abroad. And talented, too, the mistress of five languages; and, Lizzie, not so old, I should judge, as you, by a year or two.”

“Where did you meet this prodigy of beauty and learning, father?” asked the son.

“At W——’s book-bindery, where I took some valuable old reviews for binding. She has worked there over two years, earning and supporting herself on four dollars a week. And until some one was needed to collate and arrange my old German and French reviews, her knowledge of languages had remained undiscovered. She bears an excellent character—is modest, pure, and unassuming. I was glad to hear Mr. W—— order his foreman to assign her to new and more pleasant duties, at ten dollars a week.”

“So, dear papa, you, too, brought joy to a toil-worn heart.”

“I hope so, child, I hope so. She told me she owed her education to a gifted mother. I saw her lips tremble and her eyes moisten when she spoke, and, thinking of our own loss, my children, I forbore to question her then. But I shall, by and by, for I feel strangely interested in her. So very, very beautiful; so talented, and yet in such humble circumstances. In looks, in manners, in conversation a lady who would grace any society, yet, after all, only a poor book-bindery girl.”

Lunch, which had been going on all this time, was over, and Mr. Legare, mentioning that he had some letters to write, went to his library, while the brother and sister went off, arm in arm, to a favorite alcove in the adjoining drawing-room.

“Frank, what do you think of this new discovery which our dear father has been telling us of? I never knew him to speak with such enthusiastic admiration of any one before.”

“Neither did I, Lizzie,” said Frank, gravely. “Seriously, sister, I must go and see this peerless girl—see her, too, before father goes there again, if I can. I do not want a step-mother younger than you are, dear.”

“Oh, Frank! Papa would never think of that!”

“I don’t know, Lizzie. He is young for his years. He has led a careful, temperate life, and is not beyond his prime either mentally or physically. Stranger things have happened. I repeat, I must go and see this girl for myself. W—— is a warm friend of mine, and will help me if there’s any danger.”

“I don’t know but you are right, Frank. Go, if you think best.”

CHAPTER VII.

WHO CAN SHE BE?

Mr. W—— was rather surprised to receive quite an early call at his bindery from the son of his wealthy patron—the younger Legare. He had met Frank at his club, and on “the road,” for both drove fast horses; but the young man had never before visited the bindery, though his father often did.

Mr. W——, however, received his visitor with great cordiality, and asked what he could do for him.

“I would like to see you in your private office a moment,” said young Legare, who had, when he entered the large room, cast a keen and searching glance at all the hands—men, boys, and girls—whom his eye could reach.

“Certainly. Step this way,” said Mr. W——, leading the way to a room partitioned off at the upper end of the main bindery. “Take a seat, Mr. Legare,” he said, pointing to a luxurious arm-chair, cushioned and backed with morocco.

“Thank you. I will detain you but a moment,” said Frank. “My father was here yesterday?”

“Yes; he left some work, which will be finished by to-morrow. He is one of my best patrons,” replied W——.

“He discovered a prodigy here yesterday,” said young Legare.

“A prodigy?”

“Yes, sir; at least he seems to think so, for he talked like a crazy man about her—a girl beautiful as aa houri, and as learned as she is beautiful, the mistress, he said, of no less than five languages.”

"Ah, yes! You allude to Hattie Butler. She is rather pretty, and certainly quite gifted as a linguist."

"What will you take to send her away where he will never see her again?"

"Mr. Legare! I hardly understand you."

"I think I spoke quite plainly. I asked you what you would take to send her away where he would never see her again. Do you understand that?"

"I think I do," said Mr. W——, flushing up. "But you must understand I never discharge a good and willing hand without a fault, when there is work to do for that hand. This young woman has worked for us over two years without committing an error."

"Is it no error to snare an old man like my father, because he happens to be rich, with a display of her beauty and learning?"

"Snare! Mr. Legare, have you been drinking, or what is the matter with you?"

"I have not been drinking, Mr. W——, and I am in very sober earnest in what I say. My father, though old, is very impressible, and perhaps you know it. He came home to lunch yesterday, and could talk of nothing but the beauty and talent of this girl."

"Why, he was not in here over ten or fifteen minutes altogether, and his conversation with her may have occupied three or four minutes of that time."

"Well, it was long enough to do us—my sister and myself—perhaps an irreparable injury. In short, from the old gentleman's enthusiasm, we feared he would court and marry this girl before we could take a step to prevent it, and we made up our minds to prevent such a folly if we could."

"I doubt very much, Mr. Legare, whether such a

folly, as you rightly term it, has originated in any brain but your own. I was present at the only interview your father has ever had with this young woman, and only the books, and how to bind them, was the subject of conversation. It was brief and business-like, nothing more."

"Can I see the young woman?"

"We are not in the habit of exhibiting our employees, Mr. Legare," said W——, with considerable hauteur. "But if you choose to walk about the bindery with me, you can see every person in it, while examining my work, machinery, and so forth; but I will not permit any remarks made that can hurt the feelings of an employee."

"I would be the last to do it, sir; and you need not point out this prodigy—if she is so very beautiful, and so superior in her grace and manners, I am sure I shall be able to discover her without aid."

"Very well, Mr. Legare. We will pass through the various departments, as visitors frequently do."

The young man assented, and with Mr. W—— moved through the large hall, looking at folders, sewers, gilders, and pasters, all busy at their various tasks, and examined with rather a careless eye all the newly-patented machinery for cutting and pressing, though Mr. W—— strove to point out the great improvements of the age as well as he could.

They had passed through a greater part of the bindery, and young Legare had looked with a surprised eye on many a pretty form and interesting face, for he, like too many of the upper or non-laboring class, had imbued the idea that beauty and labor, grace and toil, intellect and worth, could not go hand in hand, or indeed have any connection.

They now came to where a young girl, with her

braided hair, dark as night, wound around a finely poised head, sat with her face toward a window—a screen on either side partially shutting her in from general observation. She was bent over some scattered pages, evidently arranging them, and young Legare, glancing at the pages, saw that they were old, in a foreign language, and had belonged to a pile of torn and faded magazines that lay on the table to her left.

One glance at that form, at the shapely head, and graceful neck and shoulders, and a start of surprise, a flush in his face, told that Legare had found the wonderful girl of whom his father had spoken.

Hearing steps close to her table, the beautiful girl turned to see who was there, and, seeing Mr. W—— with a stranger by his side, turned again to her work. But that one glance revealed to young Legare such a face as he had never seen before—a face wonderfully beautiful and full of expression.

The two passed on until beyond her hearing, and Legare said, in a low tone:

“I thank you, Mr. W——, and need look no farther. I do not wonder that such beauty, combined with education and talent, struck my father with surprise. Who can she be? She was not born to labor; her hands are small, her fingers tapering and delicate—every feature that of a lady. I had but a single glance, but if I was only an artist I could paint her portrait from memory.”

Mr. W—— smiled.

“You also are enthusiastic as well as your father. But I assure you that neither you nor he need feel any fear, or dream of any snares being laid for either of you. It is true, the young girl is beautiful—but she is poor, and dependent on the labor of her

hands for her living. She has evidently no ambitions beyond it, for here at her bench for over two years she has been a silent, quiet, unobtrusive worker, making no complaints, asking no favors, shunning all acquaintances—noted only for her modesty and retiring, quiet way.”

“She is a wonder,” said Mr. Legare, with a sigh.

“I thank you for your kindness, Mr. W——.”

Then he left the bindery without another word.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHAT CAN THIS MEAN!

Mr. W—— echoed the sigh which left his visitor's lips when the latter departed. And the wealthy binder looked toward the screens which hid fair Hattie Butler from general view—looked longingly in that direction, as if there was a wish in his heart he hardly dared to utter—perhaps a wish that she was not his employee, but a member of the circle in which his own pretty and fashionable sisters moved.

He looked around to note that every one was busy, even his foreman attending in person to a difficult job of gilding on Turkey morocco.

Then he moved very quietly toward the little screened-off space where our heroine was at work, and approached her so silently that not until he spoke was she aware of his close vicinity.

“Is this work difficult, Miss Hattie?” he asked, in a low, kind tone.

A start, a blush, which made her generally pale face almost glorious in color, showed her surprise, but her dark eyes were calm and steady as she looked up at him, and replied:

“Not difficult, but a little perplexing, Mr. W——, in consequence of the scattered condition of the pages. Those old magazines, all torn apart, were mixed up without regard to number or date, and you must excuse me if I seem to work slow. I have to read sometimes half a page before I can decide where it belongs.”

"Take your own time, Miss Hattie, and make no more haste than justice to your work demands. You have never found me a very hard task-master, I hope."

"On the contrary, sir. I believe all in the bindery look upon you as a kind employer."

"Thank you, Miss Hattie. I trust they will long continue to consider me so. By the way, are you sufficiently isolated here to pursue your difficult duties—or would you prefer a corner in the office?"

"I would prefer to remain here, Mr. W——. Any extra kindness to me will only cause others to feel envious, and I do not wish to make enemies."

"Enemies! Just as if it were possible for you to make enemies. Have no fear on that score, Miss Hattie. But when I can in any way render your position more comfortable, Miss Hattie, please inform me."

"Thank you, sir," she said, bending again to her work.

He cast one long, lingering look at that graceful form bowed forward over those old musty pages, and turned away with a half-smothered sigh.

"It is a wonder that I never noticed before how exquisitely beautiful she is," he murmured to himself, as he passed on and into his office. "Her voice is music mellowed down. Her language so chaste and well chosen. Ah, me! I do not wonder young Legare feared his father might fall in love with such a prodigy. I fear I shall myself. And if I did, what would my sisters say?"

Yes, that is a man's question all over. They see a lovely face and form—all the heart they have is moved by it. But they ask not "is she good? Is her disposition sweet? Is she pure and stainless?" Only

this—"is she rich in worldly lucre? Is she one who can move a star in the fashionable world? Will she be an ornament in my circle of society?"

What ganders men are. There, I've said it, and I mean it.

Hattie paused over her work when the footsteps of her employer died away on her ear. He had not before spoken to her a dozen times in the two years or more of her employment there. His orders and directions always came through the foreman hitherto; and when he spoke to a hand he was not in the habit of using a prefix to the name of that hand. To her he had said Miss Hattie. The foreman always called her Hattie—nothing more—and she was used to it. Some girls would have been pleased at this mark of preference. Not so our heroine. She knew enough of the cold heartlessness of the world to look with distrust upon any advances made by those who were above her in position or fortune.

A sigh broke from her lips, and she almost wished she was back at her sewing-bench at four dollars a week, with no one aware of her talents as a linguist; though her advanced wages would add much to her comfort and enable her to add to her small savings.

She bent again to her labor, and sought in it and its perplexities, refuge from all other thoughts, and she had indeed enough to think of in setting those mixed up pages right. No one else in the bindery could have done it. It was a job which the foreman had laid aside as hopeless, until the late discovery of her talent.

And now he came to her to see how she was getting forward. In reply to his question she said:

"One volume is there, sir, with every page in its

place, and ready for the sewing-bench. It is slow work, for the pages are badly mixed and torn up. But I am doing it as fast as I can."

"Fast enough, in all reason, Hattie," said Mr. Jones. "You are on wages—or salary, rather, now, and not on piece work. So you need not drive yourself."

"Salary will make no difference in my industry, Mr. Jones. I shall ever strive my best to devote every moment of working time to the benefit of my employers."

"It's a good principle, Hattie, and I know you live up to it, which is more than can be said of a great many in the shop. I'll put this volume in the sewer's hands. Do the rest in your own time. It is a job I never expected to carry through. It has been laying here over a year untouched. When you get it done, I have three or four more almost as bad."

Hattie bowed her head, but made no reply. The foreman had never been quite so talkative or complacent before. He was generally stern, sharp, and imperative with all under him.

When he went away she murmured to herself:

"What can all this mean? Mr. Jones has softened in his tone. It used to be 'hurry up, Hattie, hurry up; we can't have no lazing 'round in this shop!' Now, when my wages are nearly treble, and it should be expected I should exert myself all the more, I am told to take my time. Ah, me! I hope no clouds will come to cover this sudden gleam of sunshine."

CHAPTER IX.

“LIZZIE, I’VE SEEN HER!”

And young Legare heaved a great sigh when he confronted his sister with this declaration on his lips.

“Who—Frank—who?” asked Miss Legare, looking up from a book of fashion plates which were engrossing her attention as he entered her special sitting-room, or boudoir, as she termed it.

For she had been educated at Vassar, and could not descend to ordinary terms.

“Who? Just as if you did not remember my errand down town. I have been to W——’s bindery.”

“Oh! that bindery girl!”

“Yes—the bindery girl!”

“Well! Why don’t you report? What do you want to keep me in suspense for?” cried the spoiled pet of fortune.

“She is very beautiful. The prettiest girl, in face and form, that I have ever seen in all my life.”

And Frank gulped down a sigh.

“A bindery girl, smelling of sour paste and leather—beautiful! Oh, Frank, I thought you had some taste, some knowledge of refinement.”

“I hope I have, sister mine. If you had hands as small and white, and fingers that tapered down to the rosy nails as do hers, you would throw off your half-dozen diamond rings and let your hand speak for itself. And such a form—not made up, but fresh from nature’s choicest mold.”

“You, Frank! You traitor!”

“What do you mean, Lizzie?”

"You went down there to see that your father was not snared by that siren—to have her discharged, sent away. Have you done it?"

"No, Lizzie, there is no cause for her discharge, and Mr. W—— laughed at the idea. Father did not exchange twenty words with her, and they were purely on business, and in Mr. W——'s presence."

"How many words have you exchanged with this *ne plus ultra* of loveliness?"

"Not one. I got but one look in her face, one glance from her bewildering eye, yet the memory of both will dwell in my heart while I live."

"In short, Frank, you went there to save papa from a snare, and are yourself a victim. I see through it all. I have got to take this matter in hand. You men with susceptible hearts are just good for nothing."

"You had better not meddle in the matter, sister dear. I do not think our father is in danger, at present, at any rate."

"Well, if papa isn't, Brother Frank is. So I'm going to get that dangerously beautiful girl out of the way. I'll do it if I have to make love to Mr. W—— himself, to get him to discharge her."

"I don't think he'd look at you, after seeing her."

"Frank, this is a downright insult. Comparing a Legare to a poor bindery girl."

"Sister, I did not mean it as such. But in sober earnest I do believe that Mr. W—— is in love with this paragon himself."

"Poh! Because you are a fool, do not think every one is like you."

"You are strangely complimentary, Miss Legare."

"Not more so than the object of my compliments

deserves, Mr. Legare," said the sister, snappishly.

"Good-morning. I will go to my club. There, at least, I will be treated as a gentleman!" cried the brother, rising.

"Frank; you're a brute!"

And Lizzie burst out in a flood of tears.

Frank turned back, though he had reached the door.

"Darling, do not weep or quarrel with a brother who loves you better than he loves his life!" he whispered, as he bent tenderly over her.

"Then don't—don't talk so to a sister who loves you with all her heart and soul!" sobbed Lizzie, looking forgiveness through her tears—sunlight breaking through the clouds—"dear brother!"

And clinging to his neck, she kissed him with almost childish fervor and tenderness.

The storm was over. Would that all such domestic storms could pass as fleetly, and as brightly.

Frank did not go to his club. He sat down by the side of his sister, and long, earnestly and quietly they talked about this strangely beautiful, this mysterious girl, and tried to plan out some way to find out, without her knowing it, who she was, where she came from, and all about her.

CHAPTER X.

MISS SCRIMP'S CURIOSITY.

Little Jessie Albemarle always had the door-bell to answer, even if she was making beds in the top story of the house, when she heard it, for Miss Scrimp considered it beneath her dignity to go to the door when she was able to keep a cook and a house-servant. Moreover, she was seldom dressed for appearance at the door except when ready to go to market or the time arrived when she could watch her hungry boarders from the accustomed seat at the head of the long table in her dining-room.

And Jessie heard a sharp, sudden ring thrice repeated, only a week later than when she had answered the postman's ring before for Hattie Butler's California letter, and she knew by the peculiar ring who was there. She bounded down stairs two or three steps at a jump, and passed Miss Scrimp on the landing at the head of the first stairs where, she usually posted herself to listen when any one came to the door.

The postman handed her a letter, and Jessie, at a glance, saw that it was for Miss Hattie Butler—was postmarked in California and sealed with red wax with that strange device—two hearts pierced with an arrow.

Scarcely was the door shut when Miss Scrimp screamed out, in her usual shrill tone:

"You, Jess! who is that letter for?"

"Miss Hattie Butler, ma'am," said Jess, meekly. "Sha'n't I keep it and give it to her when she comes?"

"No, bring it here this minute!"

Jess went slowly up stairs, and reluctantly handed the letter over to her mistress. She had given her letters before, which she knew never reached those to whom they were directed. And the poor little servant loved Hattie Butler, and could not bear that she should be wronged.

Miss Scrimp looked at her letter.

"It's from Californy again," she muttered. "There's somethin' strange in so many letters comin' to that gal from Californy." Then she turned to Jessie, and fixing, if she could fix, those cross-eyes on her, she said, in a whisper, a harsh, fierce whisper: "If you just breathe one whisper to a living soul about this letter a-comin' here, I'll pull the very ears off your frowsy head. I'm afeared some one is a-tryin' to delude that sweet young cretur away, and I'm not a-goin' to sit still and see it. No, it's my Christian duty to take care of her, and I'm goin' to do it. I'll see who it is a-writin' to her, and what he says."

"Why, sure, ma'am, you wouldn't keep Miss Hattie's own letter from her?" asked Jessie, with unusual boldness.

"Yes, for her own good, I would. And now, mind you, don't speak it to a living soul. If you do, I'll whip you till you can't squeal!"

Miss Scrimp was one who never forgot such a promise, as poor Jessie knew to her sorrow. So she went back up stairs to her work, and Miss Scrimp darted into her own room with that letter.

She sat down near the dingy window, and looked at it, back and front, and examined it in every way to see if it was not possible to open it without breaking the seal.

But this could not be done. The seal must be broken, or the end of the envelope cut. Miss Scrimp hesitated before acting on either of these ideas. She had heard of a penalty attached to the crime of opening another person's letter.

She didn't care a pin for the crime, but she did care for the penalty. She was like the penitent thief. He was sorry to be caught stealing.

"I must know what is in this letter!" she muttered. "I can't understand that girl. And she will never tell me anything. There's a mystery about her, and for the life of me I can't get at the bottom of it. But I will—I will, if I die for it. Jess will never dare tell her about this letter. I'd skin her alive if she did. I'll open it, and know who she has got in Californy, and what he wants."

With a desperate twitch she ran her dirty thumb-nail under the crease of the envelope, near the end of the letter, tore it open, and took out a half sheet of note-paper.

It had neither date nor place of dating at its head. The letter was composed of but two lines. She read them over aloud:

"My darling, every pledge is kept. Wealth is gained. Let me come to you!"

There was no signature—not a clew. The handwriting was elegant, but even the sex of the writer could not be determined by that.

If ever a woman was madly disappointed, that woman was Miss Scrimp.

Literally she had run all her risk for nothing. And her curiosity now was excited a thousand fold. What pledges had been kept by the one who dare call Hattie Butler darling? Wealth had been

gained, but whose was it? That the writer wanted to come to Hattie was certain. But who was that writer? Miss Scrimp would have given her false hair and teeth to know. Yes, or she would have fed her boarders on turkey for a week if she could have gotten old and tough ones at half price.

If she had only known who to write to, or even to telegraph to, an answer would have gone back, signed: "Come along soon as you can—Hattie Butler."

But Hattie would not have known it. Miss Scrimp, mean as she was, would have spent five dollars for telegraphing in a moment if she could by that have got to the bottom of the mystery which so terribly worried her.

Little did she dream, while in this turmoil of disappointment, that a pair of gleeful eyes were fairly dancing over her too evident annoyance; for Jessie Albemarle, after going noisily up stairs, as if to her work, had crept down as slyly as a mouse, and peeping through the key-hole, had been a witness to the opening of the letter.

And when she saw Miss Scrimp put the letter under a book on a shelf near her bed, the brave little friend of Hattie Butler determined that, even though the seal was broken, the letter should reach its proper owner.

"She'll go down to cut their slices of bread and meat for supper, and then I'll get it," said Jessie to herself. "She will never let me cut the bread or meat for fear I'll cut too thick, or maybe eat a bite or two while I'm cutting 'em. But Miss Hattie is so good to me that I will help her, and she shall have her letter whether I get whipped for it or not."

And the little heroine went back to her work as silently as she had left it, with her little plan fully arranged.

And Miss Scrimp, having hidden the letter, was pondering in perplexity over its meaning. She had been often exercised over the secrets of her boarders, but never so badly as now.

CHAPTER XI.

DETECTED.

Miss Scrimp was unusually cross that night at the supper table. There was less than the usual quantity of thin-sliced bread and butter on the table. The butter, ever scanty, was less by two plates, and the crackers altogether missing. When the boarders answered the cracked bell, and Hattie Butler took her usual seat close on her right, Miss Scrimp quite forgot to say, as she generally did, "good-evening, dear."

Miss Scrimp was all out of sorts, and she evidently didn't care who knew it—or, perhaps, meant they all should know it. One of the girls, Wild Kate, the rest called her, she was ever so odd, willful, and daring, happened to ask why the table was like a worn-out whip-lash, and as no one could respond to the conundrum, she gave the solution herself. She said there was no cracker on it.

"There's no need of crackers when such snappish things are around as you are!" shrieked Miss Scrimp.

"This butter was made from milk that came from a very old cow. I've found three gray hairs in a very small piece, just enough to match the wafer-like thickness of this stale bread," said Kate, never at a loss for a venomous reply when attacked by Miss Scrimp.

"Them that doesn't like what I set before 'em can go farther and maybe fare worse," snarled Miss Scrimp.

As half the girls were tittering over the points Kate had made, the latter was satisfied for the time, and Miss Scrimp's last fling fell on heedless ears.

In a little time the table was literally cleared, for girls who have toiled all day, with but a slender, cold lunch for dinner, cannot but be hungry at night.

When the table was deserted poor Jessie looked in vain for a scrap for her supper. Miss Scrimp saw it, but she felt too cross and ugly to care, and so poor Jessie went without any supper, while Biddy Lanigan and her mistress, as usual, had their strong tea and extra dishes.

"Never mind, I've got Miss Hattie's letter in my bosom, and I'll tell all about the old cat, and how she opened it, and what she threatened to do to me if I told."

And this revenge in prospect satisfied poor Jessie better than a good supper would have done.

She could hardly wait to help clear up the table and wash the dishes, so eager was she to get up to Hattie's room. But the work was done at last, and Jessie, after her usual round of abuse from Biddy Lanigan, was sent off to bed, with orders to be astir before daylight, and ready to go to market.

Now was her chance to see Hattie, for she had to pass Hattie's room on her way to the miserable closet in the attic loft, where she slept.

A trembling rap on the door of Hattie's bedroom elicited a response in the sweet, low voice of the bindery girl.

"Come in! Why, Little Jessie, is it you? Come in, dear, I have a nice bit of cake for you that I bought as I was coming home."

"Dear Miss Hattie, I thank you ever so much, but

I'm not hungry, though I haven't had any supper. I've so much to tell you. Here is a letter the post-man brought to-day!"

And Jessie took the torn and crumpled letter from its hiding-place in the bosom of her ragged dress.

"Why, Jessie, it has been opened!" exclaimed Hattie, in surprise, and an angry flush overspread her face.

"Yes, Miss Hattie, and I went in and got it where it had been hidden, or you would never have seen it!" said Jessie, "and if I am whipped to death for it, I'll tell you all about it."

And bravely the poor little bound girl told the whole story, even as we already know it.

"The cowardly, meddling, contemptible wretch!" was a very natural ejaculation, and it came from Hattie's lips.

But when she read the brief letter, and saw that neither place, date, address nor signature was inside, a gleam of satisfaction took place of the shadow on her face.

"Miss Scrimp has gained nothing by her audacious act," she said. "But it is necessary that I should teach her a lesson. I will write a note to her, which you will take down to her. Leave it on her table, and instantly go to your own room. If I need you I will call you."

"And you will not let her whip me, will you, Miss Hattie?"

"No, Jessie. If she but offers to raise a finger to you, or speaks even an unkind word to you for what you have done for me, I will send her to prison for what she has done. Have no fear, my poor little dear. I will protect you, and see that hereafter you

are better treated than you have ever been before in this house. And soon you shall tell me all you know about yourself, as you promised me once you would, and perhaps if you have parents living I can help you to find them."

"Oh, Miss Hattie, if ever there was an angel on earth you're that one," said Jessie, trembling all over with joy.

Hattie turned to her table, and wrote in a plain, but elegant hand, these words on a slip of paper:

"Miss Hattie Butler desires to see Miss Scrimp in her room up stairs immediately on very important business."

"Now take the cake I got for you, and put it in your pocket to eat when you get to your own room, and then take this note and lay it on Miss Scrimp's table, and come right away before she can call you back to question you," said Hattie.

"Please, Miss Hattie, I haven't got any pockets in my dress. Miss Scrimp wouldn't let me have any pockets in 'em for fear I'd put in crackers or something when I'm hungry, and that is very often."

"Then run and put it under your pillow before you go down stairs," said Hattie, smiling.

"Please, there's no pillow to my bed. But I'll hide it among the rags there, and eat it so thankfully, for I am real hungry, since I told you what Miss Scrimp did and how I saw it."

And Jessie went and hid the cake, which was to be her only supper, and then quickly returned for the note.

She ran down stairs light as a kitten, and finding Miss Scrimp's door ajar looked in and saw that lady—pardon the name—busy over the book in which she kept her boarding accounts.

Jessie slipped in, dropped the paper over Miss Scrimp's shoulder on the table, and was out of the room so quickly that Miss Scrimp did not know who brought the note.

But she trembled and turned pale when she read it.

"I wonder if that little brat of a bound girl has dared to tell her about the letter?" she ejaculated. "No," she continued, "it can't be that. Jess knows I'd skin her alive if she told, and she'd bite her tongue off first. I'll bet Miss Hattie wants to take a room lower down, now that she is getting more than twice as much money a week as any other girl in the house gets. That's it; I'll go right up. She is real good pay, always cash down the day it is due, and no grumbling. I'll give her the best room in the house, and turn that saucy Kate Marmont away, if she objects to giving it up. I wish I'd set Biddy Lanigan a-going at her to-night; she would have wished the gray hairs in her butter had got cross ways in her throat before she talked about 'em."

And Miss Scrimp closed up her old account book, took up her hand-lamp, and started up the steep, narrow, and dirty stairs toward Hattie Butler's room. She had been so surprised that she had not even asked herself who could have left the note, nor even thought how it came floating down on her table.

Almost breathless, she reached the landing in front of Hattie's room, and knocked at the door.

"Come in," said Hattie, in a clear, distinct tone.

Hattie was sitting on her bed; her only chair was between her and the door, near the table, and when Miss Scrimp took the seat Hattie pointed to, the

lamp-light from both her lamp and Hattie's on the table, fell strong on her angular, ugly face.

"I got your note, and came up quick as I could, dear," said Miss Scrimp, the moment she could gather breath enough to speak.

For the long, steep stairs tired her very severely.

"I suppose you've made up your mind to change your room and have something better, now you're making ever so much money—eh, dear?" continued Miss Scrimp.

"No, my business with you is of more importance than a change of rooms. It may cause a change of residence for you, Miss Scrimp."

"For me?" cried the ancient maiden, turning whiter than the pillow-case on which Hattie rested her hand. "I can't understand you, dear."

"I will try to make my meaning quite plain before this interview is over, Miss Scrimp. Did the postman leave a letter here for me to-day?"

"The postman!" fairly gasped Miss Scrimp, her eyes a pale green, her face ghastly in its hue. "I haven't seen the postman to-day!"

"No matter whether you saw him or not. I ask a plain question in plain words. Did the postman leave a letter here for me to-day?"

Miss Scrimp determined to brazen the matter right out.

"If he did he didn't leave it with me. And if that's all you've made me climb them dreadful stairs for I don't thank you. So now!"

"Be a little cautious and a trifle more respectful, Miss Scrimp!" said Hattie sternly.

"Respectful? Suppose I ought to be to the cheapest boarder I've got in the house. I'm not going to stay here to be insulted by a bindery girl."

And the angry spinster arose, and with her lamp in her hand started for the door.

"Stop! Come back and sit down, or I will go for a police officer and have you arrested for an offense which will land you in the State prison!" cried Hattie.

"Police officer—arrest me?" gasped Miss Scrimp.

But she came back, put her lamp on the table, and sat down.

"Now tell me what you want. Don't try to scare a poor, nervous old creetur like me—please don't, Miss Hattie."

"I want the letter I know was brought to this house by the regular letter-carrier to-day!"

"Dear me, Miss Hattie, I've told you again and again I haven't seen any letter-carrier to-day."

"Nor any letter for me, Miss Scrimp?"

"I vow to goodness, no!"

"Will you swear on the Bible you have not had a letter for me in your possession to-day, Miss Scrimp?"

And Hattie reached beneath her pillow for the Sacred Book, which she ever read for a few minutes each night before she closed her eyes in sleep.

"You've no right to make me swear. I've told you I haven't seen no letter of yours, Miss Hattie, and that ought to satisfy you."

"But it does not, Miss Scrimp. Your hesitation, if I had no other proof, would condemn you. Now I know you had a letter of mine in your hands to-day, and I want it."

"I hain't got any letter of yours to give you."

"Then you will force me to get an officer and have you arrested. I would have saved you the disgrace if I could, but since you are obstinate, I will

let the law take its course. You can go to your room. I will go for an officer."

"Dear me, maybe some one has laid a letter for you down in my room. If they have, I'll go and bring it to you," said Miss Scrimp, now thoroughly frightened by the determined air and spirit of our heroine.

"Go, then, and look for it," said Hattie. "But remember, Miss Scrimp, if you are not here with the letter in just ten minutes, I will wait no longer. I will not have my letters tampered with when the law protects me in my rights."

"I'll find—I'm sure I'll find it," gasped the trembling spinster, and she tottered to the door and went down stairs, shaking from head to foot, leaving the door open in her haste.

"May I come in just one second?" asked Little Jessie, who now showed herself at the door, with her cake, half gone, in her hand.

"No, dear, not till I am through with her," said Hattie. "I don't want her to see you, or ever know how I found my letter, if I can help it."

"Oh, wasn't it fun to see her turn white and green and shake all over?" said Jessie. "This cake is just awful good, Miss Hattie, but I'd go hungry to bed every night of my life just to see that old heathen get such a scare."

"There, there, run to your room, like a good, dear Little Jess," cried Hattie. "I hear the old thing shuffling up stairs again. I'll see what new device she offers to stave off her fate, and then, as the soldiers say, I'll unmask my battery."

Little Jessie vanished, and only just in time, for, wheezing and puffing like a sick cat, Miss Scrimp

came up the stairs, and with a face of an ashen hue, entered the room.

CHAPTER XII.

WILL SHE KEEP HER PROMISES.

"I couldn't find the letter nowhere, Miss Hattie. I must have been mistaken," whined Miss Scrimp. "And I've dragged my poor old bones all the way up these dreadful stairs again to tell you so."

"Did you look on the shelf above your bed, where you laid it after opening and reading it?" asked Hattie, very quietly, but with her dark eyes fixed on the ashen face of the old vixen.

"What?" almost screamed Miss Scrimp. "Do you accuse me of opening one of your letters?"

"Yes—I do. There were two witnesses to the act."

"It's a lie! There wasn't a single one beside me in the room," yelled Miss Scrimp, wild and desperate. "No one could have seen me do it."

"Three witnesses, since you have turned State's evidence, and confessed it!" said Hattie, so provokingly quiet.

"I didn't confess. I only said no one saw me do it."

"Oh, yes, there did—and I will be able to prove it before the magistrate when I have you arrested. If you had confessed your fault at once I might have excused your criminal curiosity, and forgiven you in the hope that hereafter you would be a wiser and a better woman. But since you deny your guilt I may as well prove it and have you punished. Inside the walls of a prison you may have time to reflect on the manner in which you have treated poor

girls who were in your power. You will get better board there than your boarders get here."

"In prison?" gasped Miss Scrimp.

"Yes, in prison, where you will be sent for breaking the seal of my letter."

"I didn't break the seal—I only tore it open at the end!" whined the wretched culprit.

"With your thumb-nail. No matter where or how you opened my private letter after taking it from the hands of your servant, who received it from the postman."

"Oh, there's where you found it out? Little Jess has told on me. Oh, but I'll skin her for it. I'll scratch her brown eyes out! I'll——"

"Hush, Miss Scrimp. You will not in any way dare to injure the poor girl. I have not said she was a witness. I have said there were at first two witnesses—you, in your own confession, make the third. I need no more. You can go to your room, while I put on my things and go for an officer."

"Oh, mercy!" screamed Miss Scrimp, "don't have me arrested. I did do it. I did read the letter. There were only two lines of reading in it, and I couldn't make nothin' out o' them. Oh, dear, dear, it will be the ruin of me—the everlastin' ruin. Oh, do have mercy on a poor creetur' that has always been as good to you as she knew how."

And Miss Scrimp threw herself on her knees on the bare, uncarpeted floor, and with tears streaming down her sallow cheeks, looked in agony on the girl who held her at her mercy.

"Some one has stolen the letter off my shelf, where I hid it," she moaned. "If they hadn't I would have brought it right up to you. Oh, do pity me, Miss Hattie. I was so put out 'cause I couldn't

find out who was a writin' to you from Californy. Do forgive me; I'll never, never do so again."

"Get up and sit down," said Hattie. "Never kneel except to the Father above, and of Him ask forgiveness. If I should abstain from arresting you for this crime you must promise me several things and keep your promises, too, or I shall not keep mine. And you must answer several questions truly. On yourself now will depend my action."

"Oh, I'll promise anything, and keep it, too, and I'll answer all you ask, if you'll only not have me arrested. I know I did wrong, I knew it all the time I was doing it, but it seemed as if I couldn't help it."

"Promise me from this time on to treat poor Jessie Albemarle kindly, never to whip her, never even to scold her without she is at fault," said Hattie.

"I promise," sobbed Miss Scrimp.

"And promise if one of the poor girls, or any of them, are taken sick, not to treat her or them inhumanly, and send them off to suffer, but to wait till they can recover and pay for their board and nursing."

"I promise," gasped Miss Scrimp.

"Next, I want you to put enough on the table for your boarders to eat, so that they need not arise from the table hungry."

"It'll ruin me, but I'll do it," moaned the hapless woman, fairly writhing at the thought.

"I will ask no more promises now. If you keep what you have made you will have no cause to regret it. But there are a few questions for you to answer. You have got Jessie Albemarle bound out to you till she reaches the age of eighteen?"

"Yes, I got her from the asylum."

"What do you know about her parentage?"

"Nothing, for sure, except what they told me at the asylum. They said she was left there a baby, in nice clothes, with a lot of fine things in a basket. There was a gold necklace around her neck, and on the clasp the name, Jessie Albemarle, and in the basket a note asking she might be kept tenderly, for some day she'd be called for. And they kept her there, and taught her readin', and writin', and 'rithmetic, and all that, till she was over twelve years old, and then I got her. She hasn't growed a bit since, though she is over fifteen now."

"No wonder, for you have starved and worked her almost to death. But this cruelty shall go no farther; henceforth she shall be treated at least like a human being."

"Oh, Miss Hattie, aren't you going to have any mercy on me?"

"All, and even more than you deserve, Miss Scrimp. But I am not done with my questions yet. A lady called here not long ago to ask after Jessie Albemarle?"

"Yes, and I told her she had run away. I didn't know where she was."

"What did you do it for?"

"I was afraid it was the girl's mother, and I'd lose Jess, when I need her so much."

"Oh, you heartless creature! What did the lady say?"

"She cried and took on terrible, but I didn't let her into the house fer fear she'd see Jess. I happened by good luck to be at the door when she came. She was a grand looking lady, with diamonds in her ears and on her fingers."

"Was that the last you heard of it?"

"No, they sent for me down to the asylum, and I

told 'em the same story. I said Jess had run away."

"That makes another fraud, Miss Scrimp, for which you could be arrested and punished."

"Oh, dear me! You'll not have me arrested for what I tell you, when I only answer the questions you force on me."

"It depends entirely on yourself now. Treat Jessie kindly, set a good fair table. I ask no luxuries, only that you have enough for all, and you are safe from the arrest which I can and will have made if you break a single promise."

"I'll keep my word if it just ruins me," sighed Miss Scrimp. "And now, Miss Hattie, please, please do me one favor."

"What is it?"

"Tell me who is it that is writin' to you from Californy. I'm just dyin' to know."

"I cannot tell you at present," said Hattie. "The time may not be far distant when I shall make no secret of it to you or any one else. Now you can go."

"Thankee, Miss Hattie. I'll live in hopes. But I'd give anything to know now."

Hattie made no answer, and Miss Scrimp took up her lamp and crept down stairs again to mourn over the change that had got to come in her household.

And Hattie, delighted at her victory, pondered over a new thought. How would she go to work to discover if the lady who had called was really the mother of Little Jessie, and if so, how could she inform her that her child was alive and needful of a mother's care and love?

"It can only be done by advertising, and I will do it," said Hattie, after she had thought over it a while.

Then she took the crumpled letter, of two lines only, and looked at it over and over again, with tears in her eyes.

“Oh, Father in Heaven, guide me!” she said. “Dare I trust him now? Has he surely conquered that fearful appetite or passion which drags so many noble souls down to death and perdition?”

CHAPTER XIII.

"IT IS A GEM!" HE CRIED.

Mr. Legare sat in his magnificent library, talking with Frank and Lizzie, his only children. Where the large room was not lined with book-cases filled from ceiling to floor with choice works, paintings by the masters of art filled every space.

To a scholar and an artist that library would seem a fairy region where taste and fancy, roaming hand in hand, could live forever. And Mr. Legare had tastes which fed on the artistic beauty of his paintings, and enjoyed the worth of his valuable books. He had tried to rear his children to the same taste, to similar noble and improving studies. But he had also, with his almost unlimited wealth, given them access to all fashionable pleasures, and the consequence was that both son and daughter found more pleasure in the outside world than in the solid realities of their palace-like home. The opera and its circle of fashion, theatrical spectacles, not the grand old plays of Shakespeare, balls, routs, and club pastimes suited them far better than to gaze on those noble works of art, or pore over the grand array of books which filled the hundreds of shelves in the best private library in the great city.

Mr. Legare was looking over his last acquisition, the rare old reviews, beautifully bound, which had just been sent in from Mr. W——'s book-bindery. The work was, as usual with that establishment, elegantly done; but Mr. Legare was intently look-

ing over the inside of the works, while Frank and Lizzie were looking over a new collection of fine English prints, which had just been received from London, and were now spread out on the mosaic table-center.

Suddenly an exclamation of surprise and pleasure broke from the old gentleman's lips.

"Wonderful! It is a gem! and it illustrates the subject perfectly!" he cried.

"What is it that pleases you so, papa?" asked the daughter.

"A pencil sketch on the blank leaf of this old review. It is an illustrated idea of a dream of Martin Luther—angels poring over the revealed word of God. It is perfection, and entirely fresh. It must be the work of that wonderful girl down at W——'s bindery, for she alone has had the care of this work since it left my hands, and the drawing was not there when I took the pages to the bindery. It must be the work of that wonderfully gifted girl. I'll find out, and if it is, she must and shall have a chance to study art. This sketch would do credit to a Dore, or any other artist. Come and look at it, Frank."

"Excuse me, father, I am looking over your new portfolio, and, moreover, I am no believer in the wonderful talent of shop-girls. It is very easy, when so many works are coming and going, to make copies of sketches. That may be a copy from Dore, for all you know."

"Even if copied, none but an artistic hand could do it so well," said the old gentleman, his eyes still lingering over the sketch.

At that moment a tall lady, of middle age, noble

in appearance, and dressed richly, but plainly, and in excellent taste, entered the room.

Both the young people arose with a glad cry:

"Aunt Louisa, when did you come? Oh, how glad we are to see you!"

And the old gentleman left his book and its new-found illustration, to greet the visitor, who, it seemed, was a widowed sister of his late wife, who, living in another city, visited him occasionally, and ever found a welcome, a warm and heartfelt welcome, from himself and his children.

The children, or rather young people—they were rather too old to be called children—loved their Aunt Louisa very much, for she was all tenderness to them, and though often sad, as if a secret sorrow lay heavily on her heart, she was ever ready to join them in any festive movement, any pleasure-giving excursion, and seemed to strive to be doubly cheerful to add to their happiness on such occasions.

"I have but just arrived," she said, "and even left my trunk at the depot in my haste to see the dear ones here."

"I will send George for it right away, dear aunt—give me the check," cried Frank.

"And then come here and look at these old works, Louisa, and a wonderful little pencil sketch I have just discovered," said the old gentleman.

The lady handed her nephew the check for her baggage, and while he went out to send the coachman after it, she went to the table where Mr. Legare had been seated, examining the newly-bound works.

"What artist drew that?" she exclaimed, the moment her eyes fell on the sketch which had so attracted his attention.

"I am not sure yet," he answered. "But I believe

it to be the production of a poor girl, whom I found sewing in a bindery for four dollars a week, and yet a complete mistress of five different languages—perhaps more. I see her initials, 'H. B.', in one corner of the sketch."

"How old is this wonderful girl?" asked the lady, with an air of sudden interest.

"She may be twenty or even one or two years older. Not under eighteen, at any rate," replied the old gentleman.

"Too old!" sighed the lady to herself, in a sad whisper.

What she meant we cannot know. Her brother-in-law did not hear her, or only the sigh, if he did, and he continued:

"I got the girl promoted as a reader and collator, and now they give her ten dollars a week for work on just such jobs as this—arranging and preparing choice old works like these. W—— had quite a lot on hand which he could do nothing with until the talent and education of this girl came into notice almost by accident. She is a wonder. Louisa—you are childless—I do wish you would adopt that girl. She is lovely as a picture."

Tears came into the hazel eyes of the lady as she said:

"I fear my heart would not go out to a stranger!"

"You could not help liking this girl. She is so modest and unobtrusive. Her employer, and the foreman, under whom she has worked for over two years, speak in the highest terms of her. She makes no associates, and for a wonder no enemies, though she shuns all acquaintance."

"We shall have to go and see this wonderful girl, Aunt Louisa," said Lizzie, rather petulantly. "Papa

is quite carried away with her. He could talk of nothing else when he came home to lunch on the day he discovered her."

"Perhaps we will go to see her some day!" said her Aunt Louisa, in a kindly tone. "It is not often we find refinement and the proof of education among those who toil for their daily bread. No matter how gifted the toiler may be by nature, he or she has but little time to improve the gifts of nature."

"That is only too true!" said Mr. Legare. "And so much the more it becomes the duty of us, who have been blessed with wealth, to use that wealth in helping these rough jewels to see the light. Though I shall leave my children enough for all proper needs and uses—enough for them to hold their station in life and enjoy it—I intend to leave a good bequest for the purpose of aiding the poor who desire an education in literature and art. There are so many in this world who long to rise and cannot, because they are weighed down by poverty's cruel load."

"You are right. A nobler use for surplus wealth could not be found," said the lady, warmly. "I am glad to hear you say this. When I see a man pass away, leaving millions on millions, only to be increased by souls as sordid as his own, I think that he who forgets God's poor on earth will himself be unknown in heaven. Good words go a great way, but good works go ever so much farther."

"There! Hear that music!" cried Lizzie; "it is the bell for lunch. Frank will join us at table. Come, Aunt Louisa—come, papa, dear; I am as hungry as a—— I don't know what."

CHAPTER XIV.

A MARKED CHANGE.

"Ochone! The ould boy has got into the mistress, to be sure, and all to wanst. Here's real round steak, and I'm ordered to broil it nice for the breakfast, instead of frying it in hog-fat like I used to; and there's twice as much as we ever had before. And she has got fresh bread in the basket! And Little Jess is cackling round like a pullet after corn, and the mistress said I wasn't to spake a cross word to her. Sure, I belave the worruld is comin' to an end. I am to put two cups of ground coffee in the pot instead of one, and I'm not to water the milk any more after the milk-man laves it, but take two quarts instead of one. I do belave the ould maid is a-goin' crazy. She looks as if she had been a-cryin' all night; and there's that Jess a-settin' the table, and a-singin' like a little canary. I'd like to slap the jade over; I'd make her sing like a cat with a basin of hot water on its hide!"

Thus Biddy Lanigan heralded the sudden change in her department of Miss Scrimp's boarding-house. It was evident she did not like it. It gave her a good deal more work—and hotter work; for the steak, formerly fried till too hard to be eatable, on the range, now had to be broiled over hot coals.

"I'll have a raise o' wages for this, or I'll lave," she muttered, as she turned the juicy steak. For she knew how to cook it nicely when it had to be done. She had ever kept and cooked the best in a proper way for her mistress and herself.

At last, early as the hour was, not fairly light outdoors, the breakfast bell rang, and the girls trooped into the breakfast room.

How Hattie enjoyed their looks of wonder, and then their cries of joy.

"Nice steak—so tender and juicy!" cried one.

"Fresh bread and butter! Dear me!" cried another.

"Oh, such coffee—with real milk in it!" almost screamed a third.

And merrily, happily, the girls went to work over those luxuries like a bevy of singing birds in a field of grain.

Even Miss Scrimp's face grew softer as she heard the merry music at her board, though a sigh now and then told that this extravagance, while it saved her from a prison cell, was eating vastly into the profits which she had hitherto made.

Wild Kate, in the exuberance of her feelings over this change, made a speech. She often did. But seldom did she make one so much to the point.

"Girls," said she, "isn't this just glorious! Over this cup of nice coffee I feel like weeping, for having been so saucy to good Miss Scrimp last night. Over this delicious steak I feel like promising never to find a fault here again, without real, strong occasion for it. Over this sweet butter and this fresh, nice bread, cut thick, I feel like giving thanks both to Heaven, and to her who has provided such a splendid table, and to move a vote of thanks from us all to Miss Scrimp."

"Thanks! Thanks!" rose from every girl's lips at the table.

"Let us also thank Biddy Lanigan for cooking all these luxuries so nicely!" added Hattie Butler, who

saw the cook standing near the door, in her accustomed position.

"I knew that angel-born wouldn't forget ould Biddy. She has ever the kind word for me!" cried the happy Lanigan.

"Thanks to Biddy Lanigan, and Little Jess, too," shouted Wild Kate, and the cry echoed from one end of the room to the other.

But the girls had not long to tarry over this new and joyous scene. They all had to reach their workshops on time, or be cut short in wages, and soon they were all speeding away to their various destinations.

And Jessie sat down for the first time in many a long, sad day to a full, substantial meal, with time enough allowed her to eat it. And when it was time to clear up the table and wash the dishes, she went to her work with a song on her lips and gladness in her heart. Hitherto sighs and tears had accompanied her labors.

When Miss Scrimp sat down to her breakfast, which was no better than the boarders had just enjoyed, Biddy was the first to speak.

"Worra! but wasn't I mad with the stame and the hate when I was a-cookin' the breakfast sure. But when I saw how good the girl craythurs felt, and how thankful they were, sure the mad all went off, and I felt like I do when the praste hears me at confession and says it's all right. 'Biddy, go along wid ye, say all your prayers, and be a good woman.'"

"It costs awful," was all Miss Scrimp said, but there was a whole volume of misery in the sigh which followed her words.

"I'll keep it up if I can," she continued. "If I can't, why I can't."

"What sot ye to doin' it?" asked Biddy.

The question confused Miss Scrimp. Not for any consideration would she have Biddy know the truth. It would have ruined her in Biddy's estimation if the latter had known she had succumbed to the demands of the cheapest boarder in the house.

"I thought I'd just try a change," she said. "I'd got so sick of hearin' the girls grumble and growl, I thought I'd see what real good feedin' would do with them."

At that instant Miss Scrimp caught a glimpse of Jessie Albemarle's face. The girl hardly dared to, but she seemed to want to laugh right out; and from that instant Miss Scrimp knew that Jessie Albemarle knew why and how the change had come.

And the moment she could get the little girl alone after breakfast, she said to her, in a kinder tone than she had ever used to her before:

"Jessie, my dear, if you will keep a close mouth about all you know you'll never be sorry for it. I'll have a nice cot-bed put up in your room, and you shall have two new calico frocks, and a good, soft pair of shoes."

"Thank you, Miss Scrimp. Miss Hattie told me not to say anything as long as I was treated well, and you may be sure I'll mind her. She is the best friend I ever had."

Miss Scrimp would really have liked to tear the poor girl limb from limb, but she dared not even be cross with her, so, with what she meant for a smile, she told her to go and do her work, and take her time about it.

CHAPTER XV.

A PROPOSITION.

Mr. W—— was not much surprised, after what Frank Legare had said, when he received a visit from the father of that young gentleman, nor astonished when in the office Mr. Legare asked him if he would not send for Hattie Butler, for he had a question to ask her in regard to the book which he held in his hand, one of those recently bound.

"I hope the book is bound right," said Mr. W——, after having told his foreman to send Hattie Butler to the office.

"Oh, yes, it is bound perfectly, and partially illustrated," said Mr. Legare, smiling. "I wish to make inquiry in regard to the illustration."

The next moment Hattie entered the office, calm, completely self-possessed and lady-like.

"Mr. Legare wishes to make some inquiry of you, Miss Hattie," said Mr. W——. "Take a seat. I will leave you with him."

"Not so, my dear sir—remain," said Mr. Legare, promptly. "I have no questions to ask of this young lady which you should not hear. I found a drawing in this book, and I am very anxious to know who made the sketch. It is an illustration of Martin Luther's Dream."

A slight flush arose on Hattie's cheek when he opened the book and pointed to the pencil sketch.

"I meant no wrong, sir," she said; "it was a careless fancy, done in a few moments in our dinner hour, when we are at rest to eat or exercise as we

please. I had read the dream, had my pencil in my pocket, saw the blank page, and made the sketch without a thought that any one would ever notice it. I often draw little fancies like that when I have nothing else to do. I have a portfolio of them at my room."

"I will buy every one of them at your own price, young lady. I conceive myself to be a connoisseur in art, and I assure you that you draw like a master. You have talent, great talent."

"Really, sir, I fear you put too high an estimate on my poor efforts. I once took a few lessons when I was with my dear mother, but the crabbed Italian who taught me said my fingers were stiff, and I had no eye for lines of grace."

"He was a fool. Those angels almost speak in real life-likeness. I must see your portfolio and have the first privilege of purchasing if any or all of your drawings are for sale."

"I hardly think, sir, they are of any value. But I will bring my portfolio here to-morrow, and leave it with Mr. W——, so that you can look it through at your leisure."

"Thank you. You are very kind."

"Have you anything further to say, sir. I am in a hurry; a part of the work I am now collating is on the sewing-bench, and the sewers will want the rest."

"Nothing further," answered Mr. Legare, and Hattie hurried away to her work, doubtless pleased to know that another of her talents had become known and appreciated.

"Have you never discovered that girl's wonderful talent with the pencil before, Mr. W——?" asked the man of wealth.

"Never, sir; it is as great a surprise to me to-day as our mutual discovery of her proficiency in languages."

"She is a wonderful girl."

"A perfect mystery, sir—a perfect mystery. That she is a born lady, looks, actions, language, all testify. That she has been a willing, steady, silent, humble toiler here for over two years, I know. I feel as if it was unjust to her to remain in such a lowly position; but I know not how she can be removed from it."

"I do," said Mr. Legare.

"Ah! If not too bold, may I ask your plan?" said Mr. W——, turning very red in the face.

"Simply this: I have a widowed sister-in-law. She is a wealthy lady, of almost angelic disposition. She is childless. I will get her to adopt this young lady. She can give her a brilliant home, and a chance to enjoy all her tastes and talents. I am sure, from the character which you give of her, Miss Butler will more than justify the adoption."

"It would indeed be a generous and a noble act, and could not be bestowed on a more worthy object," said Mr. W——.

And a sigh, which even he could hardly have accounted for, followed his remark.

"She is staying at my house now, and I will have her call at this girl's boarding-house to see her," said Mr. Legare, "or perhaps it would be better she should call here?"

"Would it not be easier for the lady to communicate her offer by letter," suggested Mr. W——.

"It might be easier, but hardly so satisfactory as it would be for them to see each other, and judge, as most people will from an interview, how one would

like the other. But I'll tell you what to do, W——, sound the girl on the subject, and see what her feelings are, and let me know. Then it will be time enough to decide how to bring on a meeting between her and Mrs. Emory, my sister-in-law."

"All right, Mr. Legare. I will endeavor to disclose your plan to Miss Butler in as delicate a manner as possible. I know she is very high-strung and independent, and she will shrink from incurring obligations unless she feels that she can render an equivalent."

"She could. My sister-in-law is a sad and lonely woman. Some secret sorrow, which her friends could never fathom, has laid heavily on her heart for years. It makes her so melancholy at times that we have almost feared for her reason. A sweet, companionable girl, intellectual and gifted, would be a blessing in her lonely home."

"It would seem so. Can I speak of the lady and her circumstances?" asked W——.

"Certainly. Say all that I have said to Miss Butler, and add that I feel a fatherly interest in her welfare. Were I childless, I would adopt her myself. But I have two dear children, a son and daughter, as you know, and they would think it treason to them were I to invite another to my home."

"And who could blame them?" added Mr. W——. "Well, I will approach the young lady on the matter, and let you know what she thinks about it the next time you call."

"Which will be very soon," said Mr. Legare, now taking his leave.

"Jupiter Tonans! I see a way now which will make even my proud sisters come to my views. The

poor shop-girl, once adopted in a wealthy and aristocratic family, will not be objectionable to them, if indeed in that position she is ever recognized as having been here. I will persuade her to accept this adoption, and then, if it be possible to persuade her to accept me as a husband, I shall be the happiest man alive; for I cannot deny in my own heart that I love the sweet girl even where she is, and as she is, and had I only my own feelings to consult, I would tell her so, and offer her my hand within the hour."

Thus soliloquized Mr. W——, while she who so occupied his thoughts went steadily on with her task, thinking, while so engaged, of nothing else.

And he was studying whether it would do to approach her mind on this subject of adoption there in the bindery, or at home in her boarding-house, where possibly his interview, which might be lengthy, would not be so noticed as it would be if held in the shop or his office.

For he knew he could not be too careful, either for her or for himself, in a world where nine-tenths of the people are censorious and full of suspicion, and the other tenth as ready to believe evil as good, no matter whence it comes.

So he decided, having her address, as well as that of every other employee, on his books, to call upon her at her boarding-house.

So he sat down at his desk and wrote these words:

"MISS HATTIE:—Friends who feel a deep interest in your welfare, who appreciate your clear intellect, your excellent education, your talent, and your graces of person and manner, have deputed me to make a proposition alike honorable to you and nobly generous in them—a proposition which will remove

you from the world of toil and care to a position of affluence and independence, without compromising your dignity or lessening you in your esteem. To convey the proposition, it is necessary I should hold a brief interview with you, and it seems to me it would be more consistent and proper for your position and mine that I should hold the interview at your residence or boarding-house. Therefore, I will call there this evening, at eight o'clock, to see you, in the presence of friends, if you think it necessary, or alone, if you will trust in the sincerity and honor of one who would wish to rank as your best and most unselfish friend. EDWARD W——."

After reading this note carefully over, and finding nothing to change in it, he sealed and directed it, and going to Hattie's table, just before it was time to leave off work, laid the note before her, and said:

"Do me a favor, Miss Hattie. This note is on important business. But do not read it until you go home."

She bowed her head in assent.

CHAPTER XVI.

HATTIE'S RESOLVE.

Hattie Butler left the bindery at her usual hour, and pausing only long enough to buy an evening paper, as she always did on her way, after her increase of salary made her feel able to do so, she hurried to her boarding-house.

Now, the writer is not one who believes that woman is one half as full of curiosity as man is, but she will not deny that her heroine really did feel decidedly anxious to know the nature of the important business which her employer had told her would be revealed in the note which she was not to open until she reached home.

Hattie lost no time in reaching home, and as she had fully ten minutes to spare before the supper-bell would ring, she went up to her room to take off her bonnet and shawl, instead of leaving them on the hooks in the long hall, as she generally did.

On her way to her room Hattie met Little Jessie Albemarle, who ran to her and whispered:

"Miss Scrimp has been ever so good to me all day. I've got a cot-bed, and sheets, and a pillow in my room now, and I'm to have two new calico dresses in a day or two."

"I'm very glad, dear," said Hattie. "I hope your dark days are over, and that before long I shall have very, very good news for you. Now, run down to your work, dear—I'm going to my room a minute, but will be down to supper."

And Jessie, full of a new happiness—it was so strange to be kindly treated even for a single day—

ran down to her duties singing, while Hattie hurried to her room, lighted her lamp, and opened her note.

A look of wonder and of real perplexity gathered over and clouded her face as she read it a second time.

"I cannot, for my life, understand his meaning. What can the proposition be? He knows me too well to ever make any offer but one that the noblest-born woman in the world could accept. I am poor, but I am proud—not of beauty, not of education, but of a pure and spotless name, of an honor untarnished by an evil act or thought. He speaks kindly, seems to be very sincere, and is surely respectful. I will meet him, and in the parlor below, for I would blush to have any one see these poor surroundings when they know I could afford better. I know it is against Miss Scrimp's rules to admit gentleman visitors to see her boarders, but in this case she must permit the rule to be broken. I will tell her I must see a gentleman on important business. He is my employer, and it is my right to meet him here."

This matter settled in her own mind, Hattie let down her gloriously-beautiful hair, arranged her simple toilet daintily, and went down stairs to supper at the very moment the bell rang.

"Wonder on wonders! What will happen next!" was what Wild Kate said as she fled with the rest into the room.

There was an extra lamp over the center of the long table, and the increased light shown on a row of plates of cold tongue, sliced ham, cheese, and three large, real sweet cakes, equally distant on the table.

Such extravagance could not be remembered by Miss Scrimp's oldest boarder.

And Little Jess was assisted by Biddy Lanigan herself in passing around full cups—not of hot water, but of real nice tea, with white sugar and good milk.

“Miss Scrimp, you’re just the dearest old maid that ever refused a good offer!” cried Wild Kate, impulsively. “And you’re not old either. You are twenty years younger to-night than you were last night when I was saucing you, like the bad girl that I am.”

“We’ll let by-gones be by-gones, Miss Kate. Take hold—you’ll find no hairs in your butter to-night!” said Miss Scrimp, quite graciously for her.

“If I did I wouldn’t be so mean as to tell of it!” said Kate, as she took two slices of cold ham to herself. “Girls, if this thing keeps on I’m one to put down a dollar toward buying Miss Scrimp a new silk dress!”

“And I will double it if we buy good nice dresses for Biddy Lanigan and good Little Jessie!” said Hattie, quietly, but distinctly from her chair near the head of the table.

“Glory to her soul! I knew Miss Hattie wouldn’t forget me!” cried Biddy, and she put a strong cup of tea each side of her plate to show her gratitude.

The clatter of busy knives and forks, the cheerful hum of happy voices now drowned everything else, and Hattie, who made as usual but a light supper, took occasion when she was sure no one else would hear her to tell Miss Scrimp that Mr. W——, her employer, had made an appointment to meet her there on business at eight o’clock, and she wished to see him in her parlor.

“You know it’s agin my rules, dear,” said Miss Scrimp, trying hard to be gracious.

"I know it, Miss Scrimp, and under no other circumstances would I ask the favor," replied Hattie, still speaking in an undertone.

"Couldn't you see him in my room, and I'd make it seem as if he came to see me on business," said Miss Scrimp, in a pleading tone. "You see, if once I break over my rule, every girl in the house will be askin' to have her beau meet her in my parlor, and the whole house would soon be overrun by horrid men."

"I did not take that view of the case when I made the application. But, on second thought, I am very willing to see Mr. W—— in your sitting-room and in your presence."

"That's a dear, good girl! I'll fix it so I let him in myself, and I'll take him right to my room, where you'll be, and not a girl in the house shall see him, or know who he came to see other than me," said the old maid, happy at the thought that she could hear what this important business was.

A secret to Miss Scrimp was a jewel to be possessed at the risk of death almost.

Seeing that the clock at the end of the dining-room was about to strike eight, she whispered to Hattie to go to her room, and left the table herself just as the front door bell rang.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE INTERVIEW.

"I'll go to the door, dear—you keep on waitin' on the table. I'm expecting the house agent," said Miss Scrimp to Little Jessie, who started when she heard the bell ring.

And while Miss Scrimp went to the front door, Hattie Butler, in her usual leisurely way, left the table, as if going to her own room. But, when out of the dining-room, she hurried up the first flight of stairs, and turned into the room used both as sitting-room and chamber by Miss Scrimp. While at the head of the stairs she heard her landlady say:

"Come right in, sir, you're expected. Come right in."

The curiosity of Miss Scrimp to know what important business her boarder could have, made the old spinster even cordial to a horrid man.

In another minute Miss Scrimp shuffled in in her slip-shod shoes, and she was followed by Mr. W——.

When the door was closed, Hattie formally introduced the famous and wealthy proprietor of the bindery to her boarding mistress, and then added:

"If you please, Mr. W——, you can mention your business in the presence of this lady. I will answer for her silence in regard to it hereafter, whatever it may be."

"Certainly, Miss Hattie," said he.

But he was a little confused, and evidently would not have had that vinegar-faced woman there if he could help it. But in his own note he had told her

to have witnesses to the interview if she desired, and surely it was prudent to have that hideous old ghost of a landlady there—perhaps policy, too, for in contrast Hattie looked positively angelic.

Mr. W—— had never seen that wealth of glossy raven hair floating in shining, curling masses down over her white shoulders clear to her waist, before, and she had put on a neat, real lace collar when she went to her room; and a pair of daintily ruffled cuffs made her small hands look even yet more delicate, and they were such beautiful hands, without a single ring to mar their delicate contour.

Mr. W—— hesitated only a moment, while his eager eyes drank in that flood of beauty, and then he said:

“I was sent to you by Mr. Legare, who has a wealthy, widowed sister-in-law, a Mrs. Louisa Emory, residing in a neighboring city, who is childless and lonely. She is a lady in every sense, of a sweet and loving disposition, and a companion like yourself would be a treasure to her. If you will consent, Mr. Legare, who, like myself, is truly and sincerely your friend, and deeply interested in your welfare, will propose to her that she adopt you as a daughter—to receive all a daughter’s love and privileges.”

Hattie looked at Mr. W—— with astonishment. The thought of being adopted as a daughter by a lady of wealth whom she had never seen, and who had never seen her, was so strange. And it was just like the stupidity of mankind to go to work that way about it.

“You can think of it leisurely, Miss Hattie, and give me your answer in writing, if you like,” continued Mr. W——.

"I will give you an answer before you leave, Mr. W——," said Hattie, quietly. "But before I do so I would ask your opinion about this affair?"

"Really, Miss Hattie, I consider it one of the most brilliant chances of your young life. You are too well educated, too talented, and, believe me, I say it not in flattery, too beautiful, to drudge your life away in a book-bindery, when you can ornament the highest circles of society. If you ask it as advice, I would say accept this proposition, for it would not have been made by Mr. Legare without he knew it would prove a happiness to his often sad-hearted sister-in-law. She is now visiting at his house, and to-morrow an interview between you would soon show how you would like her."

"She might not like me," said Hattie, with a smile.

"How could she help it?" said Mr. W——, impulsively.

"There will be no need for her to try," said Hattie, gently but firmly. "Gratefully, but positively, I must decline the tempting offer. I am content, Mr. W——, to continue in my present condition in your bindery. Miss Scrimp here makes it as pleasant as possible for her boarders, and in receiving your visit to-night has broken over one of her strictest rules—never to permit the visits of gentlemen to the house."

"For which I thank her in sincerity," said Mr. W——, bowing gracefully to the old maid.

"Is your decision final? Must I take that answer back to Mr. Legare?" he continued, addressing Hattie, and not noticing the simpering smile with which Miss Scrimp received his thanks.

"Yes, Mr. W——. I am at least independent now,

so long as health and strength last, and, thanks to your generous increase of salary, I am laying up money which will keep me so, even should sickness reach me."

"Heaven prevent that!" exclaimed Mr. W—. "I can but admire your independence, and rejoice, selfishly, that I am not to lose your valuable services at the bindery. But I know Mr. Legare will grieve at your decision. He said that if he had not children of his own he would adopt you himself."

"I am grateful for his interest, and yours also, Mr. W—, while I decline the bright future you would make for me. By the way, Mr. W—, let me run up stairs to my room and get that portfolio of drawings, or, rather, pencil sketches, which Mr. Legare wished to see—that is, if it is not too much trouble for you to take them."

"It is not a trouble, but a pleasure instead," he said, and away she went.

"The dear creetur! Who'd think she'd refuse such a chance? Most any girl in the world would just snap at it," said Miss Scrimp, determined to keep the "horrid man" interested while in her presence.

"She is superior to most of her sex," said Mr. W—, with a sigh.

"That's true as gospel," said Miss Scrimp. And she sighed, just to keep him company, you know.

Hattie was gone but a few seconds. Flushed in color by her exercise—for she had run up and down stairs—her beauty seemed heightened when she returned, bearing a portfolio, with a clasp, and on it a monogram—the letters "G. E. L."

"They are all in here, and when he has looked them over he can take any that he desires at his own

price, and hand the rest back to you," said Hattie, as she handed the portfolio to Mr. W——.

"And I hope to be allowed to purchase what he leaves, if indeed any," said Mr. W——. "The drawing you made in his book was a pleasant surprise to me. I did not know we had such a talented artist in the bindery."

Mr. W—— arose to go, and Miss Scrimp stood ready to see him to the door.

"Please wait here a minute, dear—I want to say something to you," she whispered to Hattie as she went out.

After seeing Mr. W—— out, Miss Scrimp hurried back and found Hattie waiting.

"What luck!" said the former, as she shuffled into the room. "Not a girl in the house saw him come or go. And what a nice man he is! Why, Miss Hattie, I'd almost have him myself, if he'd ask me. And I'd make no mean match, either. I'm just forty-six, and I've a thousand dollars in bank for every year of my life. Now, don't tell him so—or if you should happen to let it slip, be sure and tell him not to tell any one else. I've got it safe in the best bank in the city."

"Was that all you wanted to say to me, Miss Scrimp?" asked Hattie, not at all impressed by the bank account of the ancient young lady of acknowledged forty-six.

"Well, no; I wanted to say how I admired your independence in refusing such a grand offer, and that I'd keep your secret ever so close."

"Miss Scrimp, it is no secret. I am utterly indifferent whether it is known or remains unknown. It is enough for me to keep your secrets."

And Hattie moved out of the room with the air of a queen.

"Oh, the wretch! I could just scratch her eyes out!" hissed Miss Scrimp, when the door closed and she was alone. "I'm in her power, or I'd—I'd—the mercy only knows what I wouldn't do! I'll bet that bindery man'll try to marry her. But he sha'n't, not if I can help it. I'll marry him myself first. I've got nigher sixty thousand dollars in bank, than what I told her, and if he has got something to put with it, he could give up book-binderies, and I'd let out the boarding-house business to the first one who'd take it. I don't like horrid men, but I do like him, he smiled so sweet when he thanked me for breakin' over my rules on his account."

And the old spinster rubbed her thin, skinny hands together, and stood up before her cracked looking-glass, and made all sorts of pretty faces at herself, while she smoothed down her false hair and tried to see how interesting she could look in the glass.

Satisfied, after wriggling into a dozen different positions, she went down stairs to see if things were cleared up at the table, and to take another cup of tea in the kitchen, for she was a great tea-drinker.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CRITICISING THE SKETCHES.

Mr. W—— went directly home after his interview with Hattie Butler, and in the presence of his sisters, Flotie and Anna, he opened the portfolio, and together they examined the sketches—not less than thirty or forty in number. They were on all kinds of subjects—some landscapes and others figures. Some few caricatures were exquisitely done—one was the figure of a fashionable belle, looking through an eye-glass at a poor ragged girl sweeping a street crossing.

The two girls laughed over this till they cried—the upturned nose of the belle fairly speaking her scorn for the poor little sister of sorrow who was trying to make the crossing passable for the lady's dainty feet.

“Why, Brother Edward, here you are!” cried Flotie, as she took up a new sketch; “and you seem to be scolding Mr. Jones, for it is his very picture, standing as I saw him once, with a paste-pot in one hand and a brush in the other.”

Mr. W—— looked at the sketch, and laughed as heartily as his sisters had done.

“I remember that very scene,” he said. “I came in one noon-time, when most of the hands were out, and the rest at their noon lunches, and asked him about some bank work—check-books, which were to have been delivered that morning. He had mislaid the order, the work was not done, and I was very angry. I wonder if I did look as cross as she has made out in the sketch? Mr. Legare will never

see that sketch. I wouldn't take a hundred dollars in cash for it and give it up."

"How she has hit you. It is charming; even to the twist on the right mustache, which you always finger when you are out of sorts," said Anna.

"Yes, it is a perfect picture. I don't believe Nast could make my face out more correctly. What are you looking at so intently, Flotie?"

"A sketch by a bolder hand, far different, and marked 'My Home.' Heaven save me from ever living in such a home."

"Let me look at it."

And Mr. W—— held a sketch beneath the gas-light, which had creases in it, as if it had been folded in a letter. It was drawn on poorer, thinner paper than the rest also.

He saw a bold outline of mountains, ragged, cliffy, and pine-covered, in the background. In front there was a deep, rugged, shadowy ravine, through which a foaming river rushed in fury. On a small, level spot, almost backed up against a huge rock, was a small log cabin, with smoke curling up from the chimney of rough stones, which rose from the ground at one end of the cabin.

In front of the open door of the cabin a young man, bare-headed, was kneeling, his hands clasped, and such a piteous, imploring look on the face that it almost seemed to speak a prayer.

"There is a whole romance in that picture," exclaimed Mr. W——. "I do not believe Miss Butler meant it should go with the rest to Mr. Legare. I will keep it, at any rate, with this other sketch of myself, till I know her wishes. The rest I will send to Mr. Legare in the morning."

"Oh, brother, who can this be? Such a nose, such

a chin! Why, she is cross-eyed, too, and as thin as a shadow, a very lean shadow at that," cried Flotie, over a new discovery.

"That is Miss Scrimp, the landlady where Miss Butler boards," said Mr. W——, laughing as heartily as his sister did. "It is an excellent portrait. I presume she is taken at the moment when she is laying down the law to the poor creatures who are scrimped at her board. It is a pity so much talent should have been so long hidden over a sewing-bench in our bindery."

"And so much beauty, Edward. You don't say a word about that now."

"What is the use, Anna. She is beautiful, but she is poor, and only a book-bindery girl, after all. If she had accepted the offer of adoption into a wealthy lady's family, as I hoped she would, you could have met her as a lady, and loved her as a woman."

"As I'm afraid my brother does already," said Flotie, gravely. "It would never do, Edward, for you to marry one of your own shop-girls, and hope to introduce her to our circle."

A sigh was his only response, and he arose from the table and went to the window to hide his feelings. For every hour, every moment, he thought of that beautiful but poor girl—every instant when he recalled her estimable pride and independence, the modesty which had so long concealed talents which left every female of his acquaintance far behind, he loved her more and more.

"He has got it, and got it hard," said Flotie to Anna, looking at Edward as he stood there in gloom, with his back toward them.

"Got what, Flotie?"

“The disease called love, Anna. And he must be cured in some way, or farewell to the opera, ball, and theaters for us. What fools men are to fall in love anyway. For my part, I don’t want one ever to grow sickish over me.”

“What does this mean?” cried Anna. “The girl who drew these sketches is named Hattie Butler, yet the monogram on the portfolio is ‘G. E. L.’ ”

“Oh, most likely she is working under an assumed name. Perhaps she has fallen in fortune, and did not want to be known by any former acquaintance. I don’t understand these things, and don’t want to. There is no romance about a shop-girl, in my mind.”

Edward W—— heard this and sighed.

CHAPTER XIX.

A TASK ACCOMPLISHED.

The next morning Mr. W—— sent one of his house-servants to the residence of Mr. Legare with the portfolio of drawings, but without any message, for he knew the old gentleman would come to the bindery to hear how he had fared in his mission, and he could better tell him by word of mouth than on paper.

But the two sketches—the caricature of himself and foreman and the mountain scene—he took out, and carried them with him when he went down to the bindery. He went through the shop, as usual, after his arrival, and saw all the hands at their various benches and tables, and noticed with a sigh that Hattie Butler, her hair neatly bound up, sat in her plain, but becoming, dress at her table, apparently unconscious of everything but the work before her.

She did not even start and blush, as she had done once before, when he spoke to her, as he now bade her “good-morning,” but responded in a quiet, lady-like way—cheerfully, too—“good-morning, Mr. W——”

“Will you have the kindness to step into the office by and by, Miss Hattie, when you are most at leisure? I have something to show you,” he said.

“Certainly, Mr. W——. I have only ten more pages to arrange in this volume, and it will take me but a little while. Then I will come.”

Mr. W—— moved on around the room, speaking to one employee here and there till he saw her start

for the office, and he entered it a moment before she did.

"I have taken a liberty, I fear," said he, "but in looking over your portfolio I found this sketch by a different hand, and thinking you might not wish to part with it to Mr. Legare, I took it from the portfolio before sending it."

"Oh, thank you—thank you, Mr. W——. I would not have parted with it for a world. I did not know it was in there. I thought I had restored it to the envelope in which it was sent to me by ——, a very dear friend."

She blushed, and seemed confused as she spoke thus, rapidly, holding out her hand, and taking the sketch.

"And on another point I have taken a liberty," he added, kindly looking away, that she might recover from her agitation. "I found a very fine portrait of myself and one of Mr. Jones, our foreman, and, remembering well the scene, felt a desire to preserve it. Will you allow me to purchase it?"

And he exhibited the sketch which had made him and his sisters so merry the night before.

Hattie blushed to the very temples.

"Oh, forgive me, Mr. W——, I had forgotten that I ever made that sketch. If I had only thought of it I would have taken it out of the portfolio. But I was in a hurry, and perhaps agitated in my mind, when I got it and brought it down to you. Please let me tear it up; it was a thoughtless sketch, taken on the moment."

"I would not have it torn up on any account, Miss Hattie. It is perfect and truthful. I want to frame it, and hang it up where I can see it every day. It will teach me not to lose my temper, as I

did that day, with an old and a faithful employee. Please sell it to me."

"I will not sell it to you, Mr. W——, but if you attach any value to it, please keep it as a welcome gift."

"I thank you, Miss Hattie—from my heart I thank you. I will strive to make you a suitable return in some way."

"I need none, Mr. W——. Is this all you require of me?"

"All at present, Miss Hattie. There is something I would like to talk with you about, but I will put it off to a time when I can speak and you listen thoughtfully."

Hattie bowed, and went out to her work, after folding up that mountain sketch.

"I wonder who that very dear friend can be who sent her that sketch," muttered Mr. W——, after Hattie had gone. "How she blushed when she spoke of whence it came, and took it from my hand. Oh, I hope and pray her heart is not already gone. If it is, what have I to hope for? For I love her—madly love her. I must know if her heart is disengaged. I dare not trust myself to ask her; I should break down in the attempt. I'll write to her. Yes, on paper I may be able to express my thoughts."

And going out to Mr. Jones he gave directions that he was not to be disturbed by any one, except on the most unavoidable business, for the next hour.

And then he sat down at his desk to try to write out his hopes and his wishes, not asking now, as he had once before, "What will the world say about it?"

It seemed a hard task, for three times he filled a

sheet of paper and then burned it. It seemed as if he couldn't get his thoughts together to suit him.

But at last he completed his letter, sealed and directed it, and made up his mind to hand it to Hattie just as she was leaving work at night.

And his heart was lighter after the work was done. He had allowed himself to rise above the cold conventionalities of a callous, heartless world—to say to himself, “if she will but have me, I will wed worth, modesty, purity, beauty, and virtue, no matter how humble the source from whence all these attributes spring. I will not allow false pride or the opinions of others to chill the ardor of true and manly affection. I will be true to nature and nature's God, and respond to the warm and noblest impulses which He alone can plant in the human breast.”

And it seemed as if a brighter light beamed in his eye when he left his office and came out among his work-people. There was surely a kindlier tone in his voice.

CHAPTER XX.

GOOD ADVICE.

The library of Mr. Legare was a favorite resort for his sister-in-law, Mrs. Louisa Emory—or Aunt Louisa, as Frank and Lizzie delighted to call her. In his books, and also in the paintings, she found joys which none but an intellectual woman could find, and here, even in her most melancholy moods, she would brighten up.

Frank and Lizzie, who thought there was no one on earth like their aunt, were with her when Mr. Legare came into the library with the portfolio just received from Mr. W——.

“Come, sister, come, children, and look at my new treasures with me,” cried the old gentleman, taking a seat at his private writing and reading-table, and opening the portfolio.

“What are these?” asked Mrs. Emory, as he spread out the drawings all over the table.

“Sketches from the pencil of that wonderful girl in the book-bindery—the one I have already talked to you about. Look at this caricature—a fashionable belle and a poor street-sweeper. Is it not almost a speaking sketch? See the abject, almost hopeless look in the face of the poor girl. Who would believe a pencil, without color, could give so much expression?”

“Your protege has wonderful talent,” said Mrs. Emory, her interest awakened. “Here is a portrait—merely a face—that of a young girl? Is it that of the artist herself?”

“No, it is not at all like her,” said the old gentle-

man, looking at it closely. "This is a picture of a young girl, pretty, but thin and weary-looking. Hattie Butler is not only very handsome, but very lady-like. Louisa, you would be proud of her if she were your daughter."

A look of agony passed over the face of the lady; she turned deathly pale, and for an instant she looked as if she would faint.

A cry of alarm broke from the young people, and Mr. Legare cried out:

"Are you ill, dear sister, are you ill?"

"A spasm. It will soon pass away," she said, and with a sad smile she tried to still the alarm of her anxious relatives.

"I should like to see this gifted young woman," she said, after regaining her composure. "Do you think you could induce her to call upon me here? I do not want to go to that bindery; and if she is as proud and independent as you say, it might wound her feelings to have me go unannounced, and without an introduction, to her boarding-house."

"I will see her when I make a selection of these drawings for purchase, and try and induce her to visit you," said Mr. Legare.

"Take them all, dear father. They are really very, very fine," cried Frank, who had been looking them over with unwonted attention for him. "Here is a gem—it is sarcastic, but so true. A foppishly-dressed fellow is leaving his seat in the car, and handing a well-dressed lady into it, while a poor old woman on crutches stands close by. She has eyes, that girl has, and knows how to use them. If I were in your place, father, and had influence with her, I should get her to make art her profes-

sion. One who draws so well would soon take to color, even if she has not already tried it."

"I'll warrant she paints," said Lizzie, rather satirically, looking at her brother to see if he would feel the shaft.

"Not in the sense you mean," he said, indignantly. "It takes the daughters of rich fathers to use cosmetics and other necessary articles to enhance their beauty. The poor toiler gets her color from exercise and honorable labor."

"Well met, my little lady. Frank rather had you there," said Mr. Legare, laughing.

"Oh, yes, papa, you'll side with him, because you think so much of her. You'd better change me off for her," cried Lizzie, angrily, and then she fell to weeping.

As I heard a Western man say, "that was her best hold;" she always conquered with it.

"Dear child, do not be so silly. No one wishes to supplant you. And I am sure your brother had no wish to wound your feelings," said Mr. Legare, tenderly.

"No, indeed, sis, not a thought of it. If it will make you feel any easier in your mind, I'll vow that I believe this low-born beauty paints and powders, too."

"How do we know she is low-born?" asked Mrs. Emory, gravely, but kindly. "Her education and gifts—her very genius would speak to the contrary. Many a well-born person, by a sudden change of fortune, has been reduced to labor. And I, for one, do not consider labor dishonorable. It is hard to be forced to toil for one's daily bread, if one has to come to it from affluence, but it is not evil. It must

be very inconvenient to be poor; but surely in a grand republic like this it is not a disgrace."

"Huzza for Aunt Louisa! That's my philosophy, too," cried Frank.

Lizzie laughed. She couldn't cry over three minutes at a time, and then smiles followed, just as the sunlight comes after an April shower.

"Your Aunt Louisa always takes a sensible view of things, my dear children, and though she makes no boasts of it, I dare say few persons more often extend the full hand of Christian charity."

"That's the hand to play," cried Frank, thinking of his last rubber of whist at the club-room.

"The hand which helps us forward on the road to Heaven," said his father in a grave tone. "And I wish my dear children to feel that while they are living in luxury, knowing no sorrow or grief but what in imagination they make for themselves, heavy hearts, and fainting spirits are all around them. That kind words, followed by kindly deeds, will brighten their way as they go onward and upward in life, even as I feel that such things are softening my descent toward the grave."

Both son and daughter drew near their good old father, and kissed him reverently. His words had fallen on their hearts at the right moment.

"Forgive me, papa, because I spoke slightly of the poor girl in whom you have justly taken such an interest. If she comes here to see Aunt Louisa, I will treat her just as well as I would my dearest school-mate or best friend."

"There spoke my own blessed girl," said Mr. Legare, proudly. "Your heart is in the right place, little one, though we have petted you so much that you forget it sometimes."

"Sis, you're a trump—that's what you are. And I love you—just bet all you have I do."

"Frank, I know you love me—but there is that lunch-bell again. Come, Aunt Louisa, I ordered oyster patties, because I know you like them so."

"And we've a brace of partridges, father, that Egbert Tripp sent down from Ulster County to me, and I told the cook to lard them with bacon and broil them brown for you," added Frank.

"They're good children, Louisa—a little spoiled, but at heart real good children," said the proud father, as he offered his sister-in-law his arm.

"It is true, brother, and I love my niece and nephew dearly," said Mrs. Emory. "They make my visits here very pleasant. It would be a dreary world to me were it not for you and them."

"Forward two!" cried Frank, as he clasped Lizzie around the waist and waltzed into the lunch-room.

CHAPTER XXI.

JESSIE ALBEMARLE.

"Miss Hattie," said Mr. W——, just as the people were leaving work, and she was rising from her table, "please put this letter in your pocket, read it after you have had your supper, and think over its contents. Do not hurry your thoughts—I will wait patiently for an answer after you have well considered what I have written. Let days pass, if you choose, I will not urge a reply; I only ask it after you have given the matter thought."

She looked up at him with her earnest, truthful eyes, for she noticed that his voice trembled, and almost intuitively she felt that that letter contained a declaration of what his eyes seemed to speak when they met her look—love.

She put the letter in her pocket without a word. She could not have spoken at that moment. For, noticing his agitation, a strange tremor came over her.

He turned, blushing, and went toward his office, while she, putting on her hat and shawl, turned toward the door. At that moment she saw the stately form of Mr. Legare in front of Mr. W——, and the foreman had scarcely spoken to him when Mr. W—— called to her.

The millionaire had come in person to see the poor working girl—to hear her decision, and to ask of her a favor.

"Miss Butler, excuse me that I called at this hour. I knew you would be disengaged, and perhaps could do me a great favor if it is not already done

by your consenting to the adoption which I had the honor to propose through Mr. W——."

"Gratefully, Mr. Legare, I have declined that proposition in an interview held with Mr. W—— at my boarding-house last evening."

"Yet, my good young friend, you have never met the lady who would take you to her home and heart. She is one of the purest, noblest women on earth. The sister of my dear, dead wife. I have known her these long, long years, and I never met her equal. Her heart is full of sweet sympathies, pure charities, and ennobling thoughts."

"I do not doubt her goodness, sir. Her offer, through you, proves it. The poor working girl thanks her from the bottom of her heart. But this adoption cannot be. Alone I have toiled on for almost three long, to me, very long years. Alone I must continue to tread life's pathway. I am contented. Why, then, ask me to change? There are thousands upon thousands just as worthy as I, and more needy, upon whom such a noble boon can be conferred. Let your good sister-in-law look for such a one."

Hattie Butler spoke so earnestly that the two gentlemen deeply felt her appeal. They knew that she alone had the right to choose. But Mr. Legare did not yet despair of carrying his point. He had yet another angle of attack.

"I have received your portfolio of drawings, am delighted with them, and shall take them at your own price," he continued.

"I set no value on them. They surely are worth but little more than the paper they are drawn on. They are the result of lazy moments, not spent at work or in study."

"To me they are worth one thousand dollars in gold, and my check is ready for your acceptance, if the price will suit you."

"One thousand dollars?" gasped Hattie, utterly taken by surprise. "One thousand dollars in gold?"

"Yes, Miss Butler. I am serious. I want the drawings—all are good, and some of them are gems. The street-car scene especially, and the little sweeper on the crossing. My son and daughter went into ecstasies over them. By the way, my daughter is in my carriage now, down on the street, and wishes to see you. She and I have a great favor to ask of you, and Mr. W—— is included in it."

"Please tell me what it is, sir. The supper hour once over in my boarding-house, and I miss the meal altogether, and it will be supper time now before I can reach there."

"You will not miss your supper if you do me the favor I ask. It is this: That, even as you are, in your neat working-dress, of which no lady need be ashamed, you ride home with me and my daughter, see my sister-in-law, take a plain family tea with us, Mr. W—— included, and then let me drive you home to your boarding-house. Don't say no before I finish. My dear sister-in-law, almost an invalid, has expressed a strangely nervous desire to see you, if only for a few moments, before she sleeps. You will perhaps save her from a fit of sickness if you go. My daughter came with me to plead for her poor aunt."

Hattie paused a moment to think. Not of her dress, but whether it would be right to refuse under such circumstances. Not of the thousand dollar check waiting for her, but whether it would be

proper for a poor, friendless working girl to thus accept the hospitality of the rich.

She did not hesitate long. The picture of that poor nervous lady waiting and anxious just to see her arose in her mind, and she said:

"I will go, Mr. Legare, on two conditions. First, that you will drive past my boarding-house, so that I can leave word where I am going; next, that you will permit me to make my stay very brief at your house. Miss Scrimp, where I board, locks her doors at ten o'clock. I have boarded with her over two years, and have never been out of the house before after dark."

"The conditions are agreed to. Mr. W—— shall see you safely home in my carriage by nine o'clock or half-past at latest. Now, come down and see my daughter, Lizzie, who waits to greet you."

Hattie followed Mr. Legare, and Mr. W——, full of surprise, followed both. He had never reached the entree of that wealth-adorned house, though he had met young Legare at his club.

At the carriage Mr. Legare called "Lizzie," and the sweet face of the young girl beamed out like that of a cherub, when, on Hattie being presented, she said:

"Jump right in here on the seat by my side, dear Miss Butler. Papa has talked so much about you that it seems as if I had known you ever so long."

And when Hattie stepped in the little girl threw her arms around her with all the fervor of sweet sixteen, and kissed her.

Hattie could but respond to such a welcome, and she returned the salute.

Mr. Legare seated Mr. W—— on the front seat, and then sat beside him, and when the number of

Miss Scrimp's house was given, the driver started for it at a sweeping trot.

"Aunt Louisa will be so glad to see you, you good, dear beauty!" said Lizzie, clasping Hattie's hand in hers. "We have been looking your drawings over and over, and there is one face there on which she dwells all the time. She says it fairly haunts her, and she wants to know if it is a portrait."

"I cannot tell till I see it myself!" said Hattie.

The next moment the carriage had come to a halt. In less than five minutes it had passed over the space which Hattie could not walk inside of twenty minutes. And she ever went quickly on, heeding nothing on her route.

"I will go to the door myself, and explain to Miss Scrimp," said Hattie. "It will not take me a half minute."

The footman opened the carriage door. Mr. Legare himself handed Hattie out, and she ran to the door, and rung a startling peal on the old bell.

Miss Scrimp, unused to such a peal, came herself to the door instead of sending Little Jessie, and to her Hattie only said:

"I am going up town on a special errand with Mr. Legare and his daughter. I will need no supper when I come back, which will be before ten o'clock!"

Before the astonished Miss Scrimp could ask a single question her fair boarder darted away, entered the gorgeous carriage, where the old spinster saw a richly-dressed young lady and two gentlemen, the footman closed the door and sprang to his place, and the noble horses dashed forward, and in a second more were out of sight.

All the old maid said then was:

"Sakes alive!"

And this she said as she went in and slammed the door.

In the meantime the carriage swept on up through the wide streets of the upper part of the city—streets so different from the narrow, busy thoroughfares below, or down town—and in a little more than half an hour, passed in cheery talk, mostly kept up by Lizzie Legare, it drew up before a marble mansion on the finest avenue in the great city.

"Here we are at home!" cried Mr. Legare, as the carriage door flew open, "and there is my dear son, Frank, to welcome us. Frank, my boy, this is Miss Butler. Mr. W—— you already know."

Frank bowed most respectfully to Hattie, as he extended his hand to help her from the carriage, and he cast a mischievous glance at Lizzie, as the latter sprang out, and taking Hattie's arm as if she were a dear old friend, drew her up the steps, saying:

"We'll run to my room, dear, to take off our things and dash some water in our faces before tea."

And when Hattie came down to tea with Lizzie, just ten minutes later, her beautiful hair was all down over her shoulders, and a real lace collarette was around her neck, and she looked, even in her plain calico dress, as beautiful as beautiful could be; and Lizzie had kissed her twenty times when she was helping her to make her brief toilet.

At the tea-table Hattie was introduced to Mrs. Emory, whose long, yearning look fairly entered her soul. It seemed as if in Hattie she sought to find some favorite resemblance, so eagerly did she scan her face and form. She said:

"I have heard so much of you, and seen such talent exhibited in your drawings, Miss Butler, that I felt as if I could not sleep till I had seen you. Do not think me impertinent or intrusive. You look so good, so pure, so gentle, I know you will forgive me."

"I am sure there is nothing to forgive. I was only too happy to come when they told me you were partially an invalid, and I could do you good by coming."

"Bless you, dear child! bless you for it! After tea we will look at your drawings; there is one especially I wish to know all about."

Nothing more of any special interest was said until tea was over, and then they all adjourned to the library to look over the drawings.

"Whose picture is this?—or is it a fancy sketch instead of a portrait?" asked Mrs. Emory of Hattie, laying her finger on the head of a young girl that was spoken of before in this story.

"That? Why, it is the portrait of Little Jessie Albemarle," said Hattie.

A deathly pallor came quicker than thought over Mrs. Emory's face. She gasped out, "Jessie Albemarle!" and fainted.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE RIDE HOME.

A scream of terror broke from Lizzie's lips when she saw her aunt fall back fainting, but she did not know the cause. Neither did Frank or Mr. Legare. Not even had Mr. W——, who sat talking with Frank, heard her repeat the name: "Jessie Albe-marle."

Only Hattie Butler had heard it, and seen that her agitation commenced only when told who the likeness had been taken from, and though a lightning flash could not have passed quicker than a certain thought crossed her mind, she dare not utter it then or there.

"Quick, some water!" she cried, retaining her presence of mind perfectly, as she held the head of the swooning lady on her bosom, "and some cologne—hartshorn—anything pungent. She has fainted!"

"Frank, run for our family doctor, quick! He lives but a block away. Go yourself—don't send a servant!" cried Mr. Legare, and he hurried to get iced water from a pitcher in the room; while Lizzie ran to her room after cologne and ammonia.

But the swoon seemed so death-like that Hattie was alarmed. She began to fear that it was death. She forced a little water between the white lips, and bathed the good lady's temples with cologne, while by her directions Lizzie put ammonia on her handkerchief and held it under her nostrils.

When the doctor arrived, in less than ten minutes, these active efforts had barely produced a tremulous sign of life.

"Let her be conveyed instantly to bed!" was the doctor's first order. "It is one of her old nervous spasms, and they grow dangerous. She must remain perfectly quiet, free from all excitement, when she is restored to consciousness. She will soon come to. The color is coming back to her cheeks."

Mrs. Emory was carried to a chamber on the same floor, and Lizzie and Hattie prepared her for rest, not allowing a servant to come near, and then Hattie, fearing she would be questioned by the invalid, before others, when it might not really be the wish of Mrs. Emory, expressed a wish to go home, saying she would come again should Mrs. Emory desire it. She would not reach her boarding-house, as it was, much before ten o'clock.

"You'll come to see me again, will you not, dear? For I do love you so!" said Lizzie, when Mr. Legare ordered his carriage to the door to take Hattie to her boarding-house.

"Yes—I hope so. I wish I had a fit place to receive your visits in, but I fear you would be ashamed of me in my little bedroom."

"No, no, now that I know you, I wouldn't be ashamed of you anywhere. I'll go to the bindery to see you, if Mr. W—— will permit visitors there."

And Lizzie looked appealingly at him.

"I surely shall ever be glad to see you at the bindery, and Miss Hattie will not be chided for any time she spends with you, either here or there, nor will her salary be lessened."

"Oh, you good soul! Frank always said you were one of nature's noblemen," cried the impulsive girl.

"I thank Frank for his good words" said Mr. W——, laughing, yet blushing at the same time.

The doctor came down just before Hattie started,

and said Mrs. Emory was better, but very weak. She begged that Miss Butler would come and see her on the afternoon of to-morrow, when she hoped she would be well; at least able to sit up and receive her. She was much afflicted with the palpitation of the heart, and this now followed her fainting spell.

Hattie, told by Mr. W—— that she could have all the time she wished, sent word to Mrs. Emory that she would come, and now, escorted by Frank, Lizzie and their father, she went down to the carriage. Mr. W—— accompanied, for he was to see her safely to her boarding-house, and then ride home in the carriage.

A kind good-night from all of the Legares went with the poor working girl, and it seemed as if they really regarded her visit as a favor, though through the sudden illness of Mrs. Emory it had turned out sadly.

Mr. W—— was silent and thoughtful during the brief time taken by the swift horses to draw the carriage to Miss Scrimp's door. Without a doubt his mind was upon the letter then in Hattie's pocket, and what might be her answer.

She was thinking of Mrs. Emory, and what had caused her sudden pallor and terrible agitation, resulting in a swoon at the mere mention of the name of poor little Jessie Albemarle. Could it be that a brighter future was about to dawn for the poor little bound girl?

Ten strokes of the great clock bell on St. Paul's, echoed all over the city by other clocks, told Hattie Butler that the hour for closing was up, just as the carriage stopped in front of Miss Scrimp's door.

Hattie did not know that Miss Scrimp had been

waiting and watching at that door for almost an hour, peeping through the crack, for it was not quite closed, to see how and with whom she would return. But this was a fact. And when the street lamp close by shone on the grand carriage and noble horses, with their gold-mounted harness, Miss Scrimp saw, with envy rankling in her heart, the tall footman leap down and open the carriage door, and Mr. W——, even him on whom she had bent longing thoughts, hand Hattie Butler out with his gloved hands, as daintily as if she were a princess and he a lord in waiting.

There was a courteous "good-night" passed between Hattie and her escort, then he sprang into the carriage, and it was driven off, while Hattie ran lightly up the old stone steps in front of the house and laid her hand on the bell-pull.

"Oh, you needn't yank at that bell!" cried Miss Scrimp, throwing the door open. "It's after hours, but I was up, and a-waitin' for you!"

"You did not have to wait long, Miss Scrimp. Not half the city clocks are yet done striking ten. I may be thirty seconds late by the City Hall!"

"Long enough, in a chilly night like this. Where have you been?"

"You have no right to ask, Miss Scrimp. But having nothing to conceal, I will reply—to Mr. Legare's, on Fifth-avenue."

"Sakes alive What did them grand folks want of you?"

"To take tea with them, and to purchase a few drawings of mine for a thousand dollars!" said Hattie, well knowing this last stroke would almost annihilate Miss Scrimp.

"Sakes alive! you're joking!" screamed Miss

Scrimp, snatching up the hand-lamp she had left on the hall table.

"Does that look like a joke?" asked Hattie, and she placed the thousand-dollar check which Mr. Legare had handed to her after tea, right under Miss Scrimp's cross-eyes.

"Mercy on me! You'll never go to the bindery no more, will you?"

"Yes, I shall go there to my work in the morning, just as I always do," said Hattie, and she was off up stairs before Miss Scrimp could ask another question.

"Well, well! Wonders will never stop a-comin'!" ejaculated Miss Scrimp. "If I hadn't seen her go in the carriage and come in the carriage, and seen Mr. W—— help her out, I wouldn't have believed my eyes. One thousand dollars—in a real check, too—I knew it soon as I saw it. Aren't I dreamin'?"

She actually bit her finger to see if she was awake or not.

Then she sighed.

"It's luck. Some people are always havin' luck," she said. "Here have I been a-makin' and a-savin', a-scrimpin' and a-studyin' all the time for forty years or more, and I haven't had a bit o' luck. It's all been hard, stupid work. And that baby-faced thing will jump right into a fortune, I'll bet, and like as not marry that handsome book-bindery man right before my face and eyes. Sakes alive! it chokes me to think of it. If I wasn't afraid of what might happen I'd spoil her beauty for her. I'd put arsenic into her tea, or pison her some way. She a-ridin' around with my man, that ought to be, in a carriage, while I stand here a-shiverin' like a thief in a corner a-waitin' for her. But I mustn't make her

mad. She has got a thousand dollars, and I'll raise on her board, and make her come down, too. She can afford it, and she shall."

Miss Scrimp said this vehemently, and then shuffled up stairs to her own room.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE OFFER REFUSED.

All was still in the house when Hattie climbed up those long and dreary stairs, for tired working girls go to sleep early and sleep soundly.

They know the day must not dawn on their closed eyes, but they must be up, wash, eat, and off to labor before the sun from its eastern up-lift gilds the city spires.

Hattie entered her room, set her lamp alight, took off her things, and sat down by her bedside to think.

She took the letter from her pocket which Mr. W—— had given her at the bindery, and put it down on the table, unopened, and there it lay for full a quarter of an hour, while she was lost in her meditation.

And yet men say a woman is made up of curiosity. And that is all men know about it. They can say so, but it doesn't make it so.

At last she took up the letter, looked again at her name written in a bold, handsome hand on a business envelope of the firm, and then she broke the seal.

The color came and went in her face, showing surprise, agitation, and even pain, while she read it. That we may understand her feelings it may be as well to give the letter place here. It ran thus:

“MISS HATTIE:—I feel embarrassed, hardly knowing how to frame words to express a desire, a hope, and a fear.

"The desire is, in all sincerity, honor, truth, and tenderness, to possess you as my wife—the holiest relationship known on earth.

"The hope is that you will listen to and reciprocate a love which I believe to be pure and unselfish—a love based on your merits rather than your transcendent beauty—a love, which, though fervent, will be, I am sure, lasting as my life.

"A fear that I am not worthy of the boon I ask—your love and hand—or, alas for me if it prove so, that young as you are, some one else has already gained the heart which I would give worlds, were they mine, to claim as my own, all my own.

"Can you respond favorably to this petition? I ask no speedy answer. I will press no unwelcome suit. Come and go as you always do, bringing brightness when I see you, leaving a void in my eyes, but not in my heart, as you pass out, and when you feel that you can answer me do so, confident that I shall ever love you. I shall never presume to press one word on your ear which shall bring a frown on the face so dear to me. God bless you, Miss Hattie, and may He turn your heart to thoughts of your sincere friend,
E. W——."

For a love-letter, it was a model. I say so, and I ought to know, for, young as I am, I've got a wastebasket half full of them.

Tears started in Hattie's eyes as she carefully refolded the letter and restored it to the envelope.

"He is a true and a noble man," she said. "A gentleman in every sense. But I cannot return his love. How can I say so and not wound his generous and sensitive nature? I must think of it—I must ask advice and aid from that unfailing source which never will bid me do wrong."

And the pure, sweet girl knelt by her humble bed in silent prayer. Then she arose, her heart lighter, her eyes bright with new inspiration.

She drew up to her table, opened a small portable writing-desk, and rapidly wrote these words:

“MR. W——:—*Esteemed and Valued Friend.* The desire you express can never be gratified, because, while feeling your worth, knowing how good and truthful you are, I know in heart I cannot harbor the love which would be a just return for that which you feel and offer. It will make me very unhappy to think I sadden your bright life in any way. Try to forget love in the friendship I shall ever feel so proud and happy to possess.

“With sympathy and sincerity, I am your humble friend,
HATTIE BUTLER.”

— She bowed her head and wept after she had sealed and directed her letter, for she felt sorrow in her soul that her answer must pain so warm a heart.

Then she knelt again in silent prayer, read, as she ever did, a chapter in the revealed word of God, and then lay down to the rest which innocence alone can enjoy—that quiet, dreamless rest which gives new life to the body and the soul.

And thus we will leave her, while for a time and for a reason we fly far away on the swift wings of fancy to a different—a far different scene.

CHAPTER XXIV.

SCENE IN THE YOSEMITE.

Not in all California—not even in the grandly glorious valley among the cliffs and gorges of the famed Yosemite, can be found a wilder scene than that exhibited where the Feather River breaks in furious haste through an awful chasm in the Sierra Nevada. A friend, a dear friend, who mined there for years, has described it over and over, and talked to me about it till I can hear the eternal roar of the white waters, feel the very cliffs shake with the dizzy dash and whirl of its cataracts—look down on the eddies where gold, washed from the veins above which may never be reached by mortal hand, has been accumulating for centuries.

While our fair heroine was sleeping, taking the rest which nature needed, in a small log cabin on a little shelf of rock and ground just above where the Feather River broke in wild grandeur through the gorge, before a fire made from the limbs of trees cast on shore by the torrent in a whirling eddy just below, a young man sat, with a weary look on his fine, intellectual face, looking into the fire.

Mining tools—a pick, shovels, crowbars, and hose—crucibles also, empty and full flasks of quicksilver, with many other signs, told that this man, young and slender, and not well fitted for toil, was a searcher for the gold with which those eternal hills, that rushing stream, are literally stocked.

Fishing-rods and tackle, a double-barreled shotgun, and a repeating-rifle stood in one corner of the cabin, showing that in the water and among the

hills the young man was prepared to find the food which is so plentiful there, and was not dependent on the far-away stores of Oroville, Marysville, or Sacramento, from which many of the miners drew supplies.

Though this man was young—not over five-and-twenty years of age—there was a weary look in his pale, handsome face, which made him look older. Light-brown hair curled in heavy masses on his shapely head and fell far down on his shoulders, and his beard, a soft, silken brown, not heavy, but long, told that no tonsorial hand had touched it for many months.

“It will be three years to-morrow,” he said. “Three years to-morrow since I looked upon her in her glorious pride and beauty—three years to-morrow since the hour when, madly disgraced by my own folly and the wild passion for strong drink, which has ruined millions of better men than I, I stood before her to hear my sentence, to be told to go from her presence and never to return till she recalled me, which she would only do when she knew I had forever conquered an appetite that had debased my manhood and froze all the love she had given me—a love, oh, so precious, so priceless, so pure!

“Wild with rage and disappointment, I tore myself away and fled with the adventurous throng to this El Dorado, but I dared not stay where men were and strong drink abounded. I wandered on and on until I could go no farther, and here, the highest claim upon this mad river, I fixed my home. Here have I toiled month after month, year after year, increasing my golden store slowly and surely, but, best of all, conquering that base appetite which lost

heaven on earth for me, when its gates were wide open.

"No beverage but that sparkling drink, which the hand of the Father gives to man for his good, has passed my lips for these three long years—water, blessed water, has strengthened my brain and given health to my body.

"And now, confident in myself, I would go back and redeem my errors—go back to claim the hand which had long, long ago been mine but for mine own sin. Why will she not bid me come? I have written three times, and have told her I am free from the chains of the demon now; that I have wealth enough to satisfy all reasonable desire, and she has only written: 'It is not time—perhaps you do not yet know yourself.'

"Ah! could she but see me in this solitude—here where I have lived alone so long—not a visitor, for I have kept my claim and home a secret when I went to the nearest post station, and no one has ever dared to pass the chasm below, which cuts off this last habitable spot in the gorge. They have not learned my secret, or they might come, for the greed for gold makes men dare all dangers.

"The sketch I sent her she received. Here is the single line she sent in answer:

" 'The picture of your "Home" is here. God help the lone one to keep his promises.' "

And the young man wept over the letters he held in his hand. At last he aroused himself.

"Once more I will write to her," he said; "I will tell her how, apart from all men, visited by none—for none can reach me till they know the secret of my path—I have worked and waited, waited and worked.

“Once every three months I go out to carry the gold I have gathered, and to place it where it will not only be safe but draw an interest that adds to it all the time. And once every three months I tread streets where temptation glitters on every side of me; yet I turn from it all with loathing, and hurry back to my solitude, where my only company is a memory, ever present, ever dear, of her.

“To-morrow I shall go again, and the deposit I carry now will make my all—full three hundred thousand dollars. I should be satisfied, but what else can I do till I am recalled? Work keeps down sad thoughts; work keeps hope alive; work gives me life and strength to wait.”

He drew up to a rough table made of slabs hewed out by himself, took writing materials from a shelf overhead, and for a long time wrote steadily.

He was explaining all his life to her—all his life in those dreary hills, and praying that she would bid him come back to her with a renewed and nobler life, chastened by toil and thought, made pure by temperance in its most severe demands.

At last his letter was finished, folded, enveloped, and then he drew from his finger a massive ring with a sapphire in the set. Deeply engraved in the stone was the symbol—two hearts pierced with an arrow.

Dropping the red wax, which he had lighted at the candle, on his letter, he impressed the seal, and it was ready for its far away journey.

Now—long after midnight—he threw himself down on his blankets to sleep.

CHAPTER XXV.

FRANK'S TALK WITH HIS SISTER.

"Sister Lizzie, I want to talk to you. It is not your regular bed time by an hour or more yet. Can you be real steady, and thoughtful, and loving, for just a little while?"

"I can try, dear Brother Frank. If I fail, why, scold me," said sweet Lizzie Legare, as she went arm-in-arm with her brother back into the house, after having seen Hattie and Mr. W—— off in the carriage.

"Well, we will go to your boudoir, Lizzie. I want to see you alone and to ask your advice."

So they went to the little gem of a room, carpeted in velvet, with flowers in every corner, curtains of lace, chairs, ottomans, and a *tete-a-tete* all covered with damask silk, and there they sat down, and Frank commenced with a sigh—a long and heavy sigh, and such a woe-begone look that Lizzie demurely asked:

"Are you sick, dear brother?"

"No, but I'm worse off, Lizzie. I'm in love!"

"So am I."

"I'm in love with Hattie Butler! There now!"

"So am I. There now!" and Lizzie laughed till tears ran from her eyes, for she had imitated his desperate "there now" like an echo.

"It isn't anything to laugh at. I never was more serious in my life," he said, rather tartly, for he thought she was making fun of him.

"Well, brother, you know I must either laugh or cry all the time. But, seriously, if I was you I could

not help loving that sweet, beautiful girl, and I believe that, like you, I would forget that she was a poor working girl. But, brother, what would the fellows in your club, the fast, nobby fellows you are always talking to me about, say if you married a shop-girl?"

Frank answered with a shiver—not a word did he speak. But he kept up a terrible thinking, and Lizzie sat still and watched him.

At last he sprang to his feet.

"The fellows in the club can go to Halifax or anywhere else they want to. If she'll have me, and father will consent, I'll marry her inside of a week."

"Inside of a church would be better, brother dear. But those two provisos were well put in—the first especially. When a gentleman wants to marry one of our sex, the first and most necessary thing to find out is will she have him. And I don't believe you have given her the first hint on the subject."

"No," said Frank.

"Nor even taken the trouble to find out whether she either admires or cares in the least for you?" continued Lizzie.

"That's a fact."

And Frank sighed while he made the admission.

"Don't you think a little courting, as they call it, in this case would be advisable before you talk of marrying a girl whom you have seen but twice in your life?"

"Sis, you are a philosopher in petticoats."

"Oh, Frank, aren't you ashamed to say so."

"No, sister, for it is the truth. You are learning me to be reasonable in this matter, and I thank you for it. It proves the truth of the old adage that two heads are better than one."

"If one is a sheep's head. Why didn't you quote the entire saying, Frank?"

"Because my little sister has a wise head, and though I often tease her in my carelessness, I always go to her for advice when I can't see my own way clear. I shall go to bed, darling, with a cooler brain and a lighter heart, and if Miss Butler comes often to our house to see Aunt Louisa, I'll do just the prettiest little bit of courting that you ever saw done."

"Good! It will be like a play to me."

"Good-night, dear Lizzie."

"Good-night, my darling brother."

And thus for the night they parted.

Frank went into the library to ask the doctor, who was there with his father, how his Aunt Louisa was doing.

He learned that she was better, and sleeping under the influence of an opiate. The doctor asked of him, as he just had inquired of his father, whether anything had occurred to particularly excite or agitate Mrs. Emory when her attack came on.

But, as we know, neither father nor son had taken notice of what she was doing or saying at the time, the scream from Lizzie's lips, and the exclamation from Miss Butler, being the first warning that they had when the lady fainted.

"I will be here early in the morning," said the doctor, as he arose to take his leave.

CHAPTER XXVI.

‘IT IS AS I FEARED.’

When Hattie Butler went down to her breakfast next morning she studied the features of little Jessie Albemarle as closely as she could while the girl was flitting to and fro, carrying coffee to the boarders and attending to her duties. And once, when she was close to her, she spoke to Jessie, and got a fair look into her bright, brown, or hazel eyes. She was almost startled when she did so, for she saw, sure she saw, there a resemblance, a very marked and strong resemblance, to the kind, loving eyes which had greeted her the evening before at the house of Mr. Legare, and which had closed so suddenly in that death-like swoon when the name of “Jessie Albemarle” was spoken.

While she was thinking of this, and what possibilities might yet be in store for the poor, ill-treated bound girl, Miss Scrimp opened her batteries on our heroine.

“Miss Hattie,” she said, “I’ve been thinking of changing my room down to this floor. There’s the little alcove off the parlor, plenty large enough for a bed for me, and my room has such a good light from the east, you can almost feel day when it dawns, and it would save you such a long journey up stairs. I’ll only charge you a dollar a week more if you take it. What do you say about it?”

“Only this, Miss Scrimp, that I am very well contented where I am, and that I would much rather pay my extra dollar toward getting you the silk dress which Miss Kate spoke of yesterday, and which I

am sure you deserve for the great improvements you have made in your table."

"That's the talk," cried Kate, from her seat. "I'll pay my dollar Saturday night."

"And I—and I!" echoed along the table.

Miss Scrimp was quite disarmed by the turn that Hattie Butler had given to her proposition. She had been all ready to sneer out that "the richer some folks grew the meaner they got," but our heroine killed the thought before it could be spoken.

And so Hattie got off to her work at her usual hour without a change of rooms or a quarrel on the subject, though Miss Scrimp had set her mind on having one or the other.

The letter she had written in reply to Mr. W——, his own inclosed in the same envelope to show him that she would never keep such a missive for others to see, even by chance, as she explained in a few well-chosen words on the back of it, was in her pocket, and she had made up her mind to give it to him, unseen in his office, when she could make some excuse for going there.

She arrived at the bindery at her usual hour, and went at once to her table, hardly daring to look around, lest he should cast his inquiring gaze upon her.

She had left work unfinished there the night before, and with a feeling of relief that she had not seen him when coming in—for Mr. W—— had, with manly delicacy, kept back—she went to work.

A step startled her soon after, and a flush was on her face as it came near her, but the good-natured voice of Mr. Jones, the foreman, reassured her, and she answered a question of his in regard to the title on some finished work promptly and pleasantly.

"The boss," thus he always alluded to Mr. W——, "don't look well this morning. He was here very early—stood at the door when I came to unlock it," continued Mr. Jones. "I suppose, like most young single men nowadays, he keeps late hours, and they don't agree with him. For my part, home is dear to me with what is in it, the blessed wife and baby; so my hours are regular, my sleep sound, and my appetite just what it ought to be."

Having thus relieved his mind, Mr. Jones went on about his business, little thinking that Hattie Butler knew better than he why Mr. W—— did not look well that morning.

For anxiety and suspense are death to sleep.

And Hattie thought, sorrowfully, if suspense made him feel and look so ill, the keen arrow of hopeless disappointment might work even a greater change in his usually cheerful and happy face. Therefore she dreaded to hand to him the letter containing her decision, while she knew that the sooner it was in his hands the better it would be for both of them.

Several times she looked around to see if he was making his usual morning tour through the shop, but she did not see him. In fact it was almost noon when she saw him come out of his office and go around among the work people. And she saw at a glance that, as Mr. Jones had said, he looked pale and low-spirited.

Feeling sure that he would come to her table before long, Hattie took the letter addressed to him from her pocket, and laid it upon the corner of the table, where his eye would be sure to fall upon it the first thing when he approached.

And then, with more tremor than she liked, but

which she could not for her life restrain, she went on with her task.

It lacked but a little of the noon hour when she heard his well-known step close to her table. And she trembled when she replied to his kind salutation, "Good-morning, Miss Hattie."

At that instant his eye caught sight of the letter, and his face flushed as he said, in a low tone: "Heaven bless you for this quick reply," snatched it up, thrust it inside his vest over his beating heart, and went as fast as he could go to his office.

Hattie never was so glad to hear the signal to knock off work for dinner as she was then. For she could not keep her eyes on her work. She was thinking how he must feel when he read her letter, for she had known what love was, and what disappointment was, too, and she pitied him from the inmost depth of her woman's heart.

And he? Locking himself in his private office, he quickly opened the letter on which he felt all his future life depended. With pallor on his face he read those words, written so kindly, yet blasting the brightest hope he had ever cherished.

"It is even as I feared," he murmured. "The flush in her face when I returned that sketch which she said had been sent to her by a dear friend, should have told me not to hope, had I not been too blind. The occupant of that wild mountain home—he who is pictured as kneeling there above that rushing river—is the happy man, and I—I have nothing on earth to hope for."

He folded her letter in his own, pressed it to his lips, and placed it in an inner pocket over his heart. And he sat there, silent and still, while tears came in his blue eyes, and yet he made no

complaint. To him she was an angel, but, alas! not his angel.

He appreciated her delicacy and her noble sense of honor in returning his letter, and he felt the full value of the friendship she offered.

“But,” he said, “how can I, loving her as I do, and must—how can I see her here day after day, and refrain from pushing a suit which, under the circumstances, would be almost an insult to her? I cannot do it. I will go away. Father has been anxious for me to establish a branch of our business in California, and I will do it. Perhaps absence, and the excitement and novelty of travel, will help me to bear my disappointment better, if it does not heal the wound inflicted so unwillingly by the noblest hand on earth.”

For two hours or more he remained there in his office, laying his plans and thinking what to do, and trying to so tone down his feelings as not to pain her when he went out, by a look of sorrow; and he had regained entire command of himself when there came a hasty knock on his office door.

He opened it to receive Frank and Lizzie Legare, who stood there smiling, and who entered his office when he as cheerfully saluted and asked them in.

CHAPTER XXVII.

AUNT LOUISA.

"We have come after Miss Hattie Butler, Mr. W——," said Lizzie, after shaking hands with him.

"Our dear Aunt Louisa is ever so much better to-day, and her first wish this morning was to see her. But the doctor thought she had better wait until afternoon, until she grew stronger, and so we waited till after lunch, and then we had to come. Our aunt would give us no rest."

"That's so. Do you know, Mr. W——, though she has not positively said so in so many words, I believe our good aunt means to give us a new cousin? I feel sure she means to adopt Miss Hattie as her daughter."

"Hardly against the will of the latter, who has a mind of her own, and few minds stronger or better balanced," said Mr. W——.

"But this morning," said Lizzie, "when I went early to her bedside, she was murmuring in her sleep, and I heard the words, 'my precious daughter,' distinctly. And when she awoke, I knew she had been thinking of Miss Butler, for she asked the very first thing if she was in the house."

"That certainly bears out your idea," said Mr. W——. "I will go and call Miss Hattie, and you can state your wishes to her. She will go with you, I know."

"Lizzie, he is just one of the best fellows that ever lived!" cried Frank. "Isn't it a pity he is only a book-binder after all?"

"I don't know as that sets him back in my estimation one bit," said Lizzie. "He is handsome, manly, and well-bred."

Frank looked at his hitherto aristocratic sister with eyes of open wonder. What he would have said had not Mr. W—— come in that moment with Hattie, we do not know, for his lips were opened to utter a reply when the book-binder and his fair employee entered the office.

Then Frank had no eyes but for the latter, no thought, for the moment, of any one else.

"Dear Miss Hattie!" was all that Lizzie said, as she ran up to the poor bindery-girl, threw her arms around her neck, and kissed her again and again.

Frank would have given his team of fast horses, anything he had in the world, if he could have used those very words and given the same salute, more especially if he could have got the return his sister did.

But he had to content himself by shaking her hand, which he pressed quite warmly, as he said:

"I am glad to see you looking so well to-day, Miss Hattie, after the fright our aunt gave you last night."

"Thank you!" said Hattie, kindly.

But Frank noted, with some chagrin, that she did not return the pressure of his hand.

"We have come to carry you home with us to see Aunt Louisa," continued Lizzie. "She asked after you the first thing this morning, and the doctor said as she grew stronger to-day it would do her real good to have a visit from you."

"Then, if Mr. W—— can spare me, I certainly cannot refuse to go," said Hattie, with a smile.

"You certainly can be spared for such a purpose,

Miss Hattie," said Mr. W——. "Your time could not be better spent than in comforting those who need comfort."

Hattie saw the hidden meaning of those words, and she would have comforted him had it been in her power. But she had made a decision in his case which she could not change.

Mr. W—— now escorted his visitors and Hattie down stairs to the carriage which waited, and when the two girls sat side by side there, one resplendent in silk, laces, and diamonds—the other in her ever neat, well-fitting and well-made shop dress of ten-cent calico, without an ornament of any kind, he compared them in his mind, and his heart still told him the shop-girl, beautiful, but poor, was superior to all others in the world—his heart's first and last choice above all others.

And he stood there and watched them and the carriage till it turned the corner, and then he went back, with a weary sigh, to his business.

As the carriage rattled on over the paved streets, so Lizzie's tongue rattled, too, while Frank's eyes only were busy studying out the marvelous beauty of the girl to whom his sister talked.

"Do you know, dear Hattie," said she, "that I believe we are to be cousins—real cousins. For if Aunt Louisa adopts you as her daughter you will be my cousin—my dear, dear cousin, will you not?"

"I fear I shall never be more than a dear and true friend to you, Miss Lizzie," said Hattie, kindly, yet gravely. "Your aunt, perhaps, wishes to be as good to me as you indicate, but I can never yield to her kind desire."

"But, Hattie, darling, you don't know her yet. She is so good! Never did a kinder heart throb than

hers. She is the counterpart of my blessed mother, who died on earth but lives in Heaven. She has seen many sorrows—we know not all, for she was abroad with her first husband for years, and we heard he was a bad man. She married him against the will of her parents and friends, but her last husband, whom she married because they all wanted her to after the first one died, was a very good man, and he left her over a million of dollars in her own right. We never talk with her about her first marriage. She does not like it. But she often speaks of Mr. Emory herself, and his praise never hurts her feelings. We all liked him very much.”

Hattie was a good listener. She never interrupted Lizzie’s narrative with a single question. And a real good listener is a “rarity,” as Mr. Barnum said when he found the “What is it.”

“Now you will think it over, will you not, if Aunt Louisa proposes that you shall be her daughter, as I know she will?” said Lizzie, stealing her arm coaxingly about Hattie’s waist. “Don’t say no, dear—at least not at once. For her sake soften a refusal, if it must come.”

“I will do everything I can in honor and justice to myself to make your good, dear aunt happy,” said Hattie.

“You darling! I knew you would!”

And Lizzie, caring not a jot that they were driving up the Fifth avenue, passing and meeting occupied carriages all the time, kissed Hattie over and over again.

And poor Frank sat there and saw their red lips meet, and he wished he could be Lizzie, if only for a minute.

But the sweetest moments must have their end.

The carriage drew up before the Legare mansion, and its occupants were soon within its stately walls.

Mr. Legare met them at the door.

"This kindness is truly gratifying, Miss Butler," said he to our heroine. "My sister is yet quite nervous, but the doctor is confident your visit will be a benefit to her. She is anxious to see you. I left her but a moment ago, and she sent me from her chamber to see if you had come. She wishes to see you alone for a little while. I can almost guess the cause of this wish, but I will not anticipate it to you."

Then, as soon as Lizzie had taken her bonnet and shawl, Hattie went to the chamber of Mrs. Emory.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"I AM THAT CHILD'S MOTHER!"

Eagerly those brown eyes looked up as Hattie entered Mrs. Emory's chamber, and in the yearning look, even in the features, Hattie recognized a resemblance to Jessie Albemarle.

"Oh, thank you, Miss Butler. I am so glad you have come," said Mrs. Emory, in a low, tremulous voice. "I have something to ask you, and then perhaps a long, strange story to tell you in all confidence."

"Your confidence, dear madam, shall not be misplaced, and I will answer any question you ask, if it be in my power to do so."

"Thank you, dear, I feel that it is so. Lock the door, please. I do not wish to be interrupted by any one while we are together. Then come and sit here close by my side. Do not fear that I shall faint again. It was a sudden shock that caused it before; but now I am prepared and calm."

Hattie locked the door, and then seated herself, as desired, close to Mrs. Emory.

"You spoke a name yesterday—a name very, very dear to me," said Mrs. Emory. "You see it here, engraved on a golden necklace, which was once worn by a little child."

Hattie started in spite of herself. Was that the necklace that Miss Scrimp had spoken of? For on it she saw the name of "Jessie Albemarle" engraved.

"You start. Have you ever heard of this necklace or seen it before?" asked Mrs. Emory, eagerly.

"If it was once on the neck of an infant left at the orphan asylum by unknown parties I have heard of it," said Hattie.

"It was. Now tell me—oh, tell me quick, if you know. Is that child yet living?"

"She is, dear lady."

"Where—where—tell me, I implore you! I am that child's mother!"

"I have thought so ever since I met you, dear lady," said Hattie. "This very morning I was looking in Jessie's brown eyes and studying her features, and I never saw a stronger resemblance than you bear to each other."

"This morning? This morning you saw her?" gasped Mrs. Emory, trembling with excitement.

"Yes, madam, and you can soon see her. But please be calm, or you will have another attack."

"Oh! I will be calm. But the thought of seeing her, knowing she is alive, is almost too much happiness. Tell me, is she good, pure, like yourself?"

"She is good and pure, Mrs. Emory. For two years and more I have seen her every day, and have had the good fortune to render her more than one kindness and to protect her from the abuse of a cruel mistress."

"Our Father in Heaven will reward you for it."

"Did you not, nearly two years ago—I do not know exactly the time, however—call at a house where this poor girl had been bound out, to inquire after her?" asked Hattie.

"Yes, I had just found out, by a long-concealed paper, where my first husband, her father, had taken her when I was helplessly ill. To get rid of her care he pretended she was dead, and so I mourned her, until at last, by accident, after his

death, I found his confession, in which he stated where he had left her, also that on her neck he had left the necklace I had caused to be made when we named her. I went there to the asylum as soon as I could, and the matron gave me the address of the woman who had taken her. I went there, and the woman told me she had run away from her, and she knew not, cared not, where she was. My agony of disappointment threw me into a long fit of sickness, and I had almost given up a hope of ever seeing my child. The authorities at the asylum went to the woman, and her report to them was the same as to me. All I could get to identify my dear babe was this necklace and some clothes I had made for her to be christened in, which were on her when her unnatural father took her away, and left her to the charity of strangers. Oh, how soon can I clasp her in my arms!"

"If you were able to ride, within the hour," said Hattie.

"Oh, I am well. I am strong now. Let me order the carriage at once."

Hattie saw that though she believed herself strong she was yet very weak. Her pallor and tremulous action showed that. And Hattie had another fear. She knew Miss Scrimp would hide Jessie away rather than let her go, if she could, or dared to do it. And she was at heart almost bad enough to do anything. And Hattie knew that there must be a regular way to force Miss Scrimp at once to yield up the poor girl, without Hattie herself using the hold she had upon her.

"Can you ride with Mr. Legare and myself first to the asylum, and get from the superintendent there an order for the child as her mother?" asked Hattie.

"Oh, yes—that is the way. My brother-in-law knows the whole story, as I have told it to you, although, for reasons of our own, we have kept it from Frank and Lizzie."

"Then let me ring for Mr. Legare. The poor girl is at my boarding-house, and before the sun sets on this day, please Heaven, she shall be in your arms."

"Heaven must reward you. I never, never can!" sobbed Mrs. Emory.

Hattie opened the door, called a servant, and in a few moments Mr. Legare was in the room.

He wondered at the joyous light which shone in the eyes of his dear sister; but the happy story was soon told, and he now knew also that his sister had fainted the night before when told she was looking on the portrait of her lost child.

"The ways of Providence are inscrutable, mysterious, but they ever lead aright," said Mr. Legare. "Who would have thought that my chance acquaintance with Miss Butler, through those old books, could lead to this happy result? My dear young lady, we owe you a debt of gratitude which it seems impossible to repay. Sister, take some refreshment to strengthen you, and soon we will be on our way to reclaim your long-lost loved one."

And now Lizzie and Frank were sent in by their father, for the story was no longer a family secret.

"You are to have a real cousin now," said Hattie to Lizzie, after the story was told.

"But she'll not be like you. I shall never love her half so well," sighed Lizzie.

"She is a sweet girl, and very smart, for the chances she has had. It will take but a little while, with good teachers, to make her one to be really proud of."

Mr. Legare and Mrs. Emory were now ready, and with Hattie they went out to the carriage.

It was astonishing to see the change in the lately invalid lady. New hope, new joys, new life beamed in her eyes—her very step was elastic and happy.

“This is better than medicine. We’ll have to discharge the doctor, and keep you with us,” said Mr. Legare to Hattie, as the carriage dashed away to its destination.

“We will keep her,” said Mrs. Emory. “I had intended to adopt her in place of my lost child, and now I will have two daughters instead of one.”

Tears arose in Hattie’s eyes, but she made no reply then.

CHAPTER XXIX.

REUNITED.

Miss Scrimp was in her dining-room, looking to the lay-out of the table for the boarders when they came to supper, which would be in an hour or thereabout.

Little Jessie, ever neat as far as she could be in her person, now looked really pretty, for her new eight-cent calico dress, though bought at a slop-shop, fitted her slight and childish form perfectly, and she had combed out her dark curling hair until it looked like flosses of raven silk. The very pallor of her little face made her dark, mournful eyes more beautiful.

The girl was setting the table, assisted a little now and then by Biddy Lanigan, who cut the bread and meat, and Miss Scrimp was superintending it all, when she heard a carriage rattle up to the door, and a moment later heard the door-bell ring.

Miss Scrimp had not yet changed her dress for evening, or put on her false curls. She thought Mr. W—— might be in that carriage, as he had been before when a carriage stopped with Hattie, and to be seen by him, without her curls, would never do.

So she said to Jessie:

“Run to the door, and see who is there, while I run up stairs and change my dress. If it is anybody to see me, ask ’em right into the parlor and light the gas there, for ’twill soon be dark enough to need it, and I look my best in gas-light.”

Jessie opened the door, and a glad cry broke from her lips when she saw Hattie standing there, and

though two ladies and an elderly gentleman stood on the steps also, she paid no heed to them, but cried out:

"Oh, dear, good Miss Hattie, is it you? See my new dress. It is the first I have had in such a long, long time. If any one wants to see Miss Scrimp, I'm to take 'em right into the parlor and light up the gas. She has gone up stairs to fix up."

"We'll go into the parlor, dear; there are those with me who wish to see Miss Scrimp, and you, too. Run and light the gas."

Jessie ran in, and Mrs. Emory, grasping Hattie's arm, gasped out:

"You need not tell me who she is; my heart spoke the instant I saw her. It is my child—my blessed child!"

"Be calm—come in the parlor, dear madam, and let me break it to Jessie, or the poor girl will almost die in her joy. She has had a hard life here. She looks scarcely fourteen, yet she is two years older."

"That is true," said the matron of the asylum; "we have the date of her coming registered."

The three ladies and Mr. Legare entered the parlor just as the blaze of the gas in three-bracket jets came flashing out.

Jessie turned, and Hattie said, as she stood there with a wondering look in her face:

"Jessie, do you want to be very, very happy? I have brought a lady here who will love you so, so much if you will only let her."

Jessie looked at Hattie, then at Mrs. Emory, whose eyes began to fill, and, with a wild cry, sprang half way toward the latter.

"Oh, Miss Hattie!" she cried; "tell me—isn't this

the mother, the dear mother I've dreamed about so long—so long?"

"It is! it is! Jessie, my child, my love, come to my arms!" cried Mrs. Emory, tears of joy rushing in a flood from her eyes.

In a second mother and daughter sobbed in each other's arms.

Mr. Legare wept, too, and even the matron of the asylum, hardened to many a scene like this, stood with her handkerchief to her eyes.

Hattie alone, hearing a shuffling and well-known step coming down the stairs, kept her composure, for she knew she would need it all.

"Sakes alive! What's goin' on here? Who is that that's a-cryin' over my bound-girl?" cried Miss Scrimp, addressing Hattie, the only one who confronted her.

"Hush, woman! This scene is too sacred for you to intrude upon," said Hattie, sternly. "There a mother, a loving mother, weeps in joy over her long lost child, restored at last by the blessing of God to her bosom."

"Her child? Why, it's Jess—my bound-girl!" sneered Miss Scrimp.

"Woman, she is your bound-girl no longer," said the matron of the asylum. "You deceived us when once before we came here to find her, and falsely said she had run away from you. Now, we, who have the right, annul the indentures, and restore her to her mother."

"It sha'n't be!" screamed Miss Scrimp. "She's mine by law, and I'll have her, if I have to call in all the police in the ward."

"One word more, one single threat, and I will call the police to arrest you, and never pause in my

prosecution until you rest inside a prison's bars, there to stay for years, as you deserve."

Miss Scrimp shivered from head to foot when she heard those words, for she had for an instant forgotten that she was wholly in the power of Miss Butler.

"Oh, oh!" she sobbed, "this is the way my help is to be taken from me after I've clothed and fed her for years."

"Starved and abused her, you mean—say not fed and clothed. She has fed on scraps, slept on rags, and if I must be a witness you will suffer now for what you've done to her!" cried Hattie, too angry to care to shield the wretched spinster in the least.

"Oh, hush! Don't tell her that!" gasped Miss Scrimp, for, as Mrs. Emory turned toward her, she recognized the lady she had sent away with a falsehood when that lady came asking for Jessie Albe-marle.

"Miss Butler, you dear, blessed angel, will you come home with Jessie and me? Come as her sister and my child!" cried Mrs. Emory, taking no more notice of Miss Scrimp than she would have done of a plaster cast of some poor politician.

"I cannot go with you to-night, Mrs. Emory, but to-morrow I will go to see you and your dear little daughter. To-night you want her all to yourself, and I have some writing which I must do."

"Then, dear Miss Hattie, I will wait till to-morrow to say what I cannot say now to you, for my heart is too full. Come, Jessie—come, brother—let us go. The matron will go with us; we will leave her at the asylum as we go."

Jessie ran and kissed Hattie over and over, and

then turned and fixed a bitter look of hatred on Miss Scrimp.

"You've whipped me for the last time, you toothless old brute; you can wait on the table now yourself."

"Come, Jessie; it is unworthy of you to notice her now. Come, my darling."

And Mrs. Emory took her child by the hand, and, followed by Mr. Legare and the matron, went out to the carriage—Jessie in just the clothes she had on when they met, without bonnet or shawl.

And Miss Scrimp, speechless with impotent anger, helpless in her rage, stood and saw them go, and saw Hattie kiss Jessie and her mother in the carriage, and then saw it drive off, and many of the boarders, just coming, saw it, too, but not yet did they understand it all.

"I s'pose I'm to thank yon for all this," said Miss Scrimp, her cross-eyes fairly green as she snapped her words short off, speaking to Hattie.

"If you thank me for anything thank me for the mercy which yet keeps you out of prison," said Hattie, quietly.

"I'd like to kill you!" hissed the spinster.

"No doubt you would if you dared. But there is an eye on you which protects me. So beware."

Miss Scrimp shivered from head to foot, and looked all around her as if she feared the hand of arrest to be laid upon her.

Yet Hattie had alluded to that "All-seeing eye," which is never closed.

CHAPTER XXX.

"OH! I AM SO UNHAPPY!"

Mr. W——, when he came to the bindery next morning, knew all about the wonderful discovery, the romance in real life, in which Hattie Butler had borne such a prominent part. For the night before he had gone to his club to try to wear off the melancholy, which he did not want noticed by his loving and keen-eyed sisters at home. And there he had met Frank Legare, who took him aside and told him all about it, giving Hattie all the praise of not only discovering but restoring the long-lost one to his aunt's loving arms.

"She is a glorious girl!" said Frank. "That Miss Hattie Butler, I mean."

"She is, indeed," said Mr. W——.

"As good as she is beautiful," continued Frank.

"You are right," said Mr. W——, smiling at Frank's enthusiasm.

"And do you know, Mr. W——," continued Frank, "that I love that girl with all my heart and soul, and I mean to marry her?"

"Whether she is willing or not?" asked Mr. W——, still smiling, for he knew only too well what little chance there was for the young enthusiast.

"Why, you don't think she would refuse me—the heir to millions. And I fancy I'm not bad-looking either."

"You had better ask her, not me. She is the party most interested," said Mr. W——, quietly.

"Well, that's so. But, some way, though she is

only a poor girl, she has such a queenly way about her that I'm almost afraid of her. I can't talk to her, familiar and free, as I can to most girls of my acquaintance. But I know what I'll do. Lizzie and her are just like two sisters. I'll get Lizzie to court her for me."

W—— laughed heartily at this idea. He had heard of kings courting and marrying by proxy in Europe, but the idea of a young American sovereign following the example struck him as being very funny.

And it was.

Frank, rather annoyed at being laughed at, dropped the subject, and turned to horses, where he was quite at home, keeping a team himself that could "spin" alongside of Vanderbilt any day. I hope I've got that term right; I heard some young men using it, I think.

And so, as I said before, Mr. W—— knew all about the happy event when he saw Hattie come into the bindery next morning.

Yet he was astonished to see her looking unusually pale and sad, as if she had passed an unhappy, sleepless night. Could it be that he was the cause of it? It made him wretched to think that she might be worrying because she thought her refusal had made him unhappy. But he determined to be as cheerful as he could, if such was the case. For he knew that she respected him truly, even if she could not love him, and he would not have lost that respect for the world.

So he made his usual tour through the shop, trying to be as cheerful and kind to all his employees as ever, and finally he came to the table where Hattie bent assiduously over her task.

"I was told last night, Miss Hattie, by young Le-

gare, that you had discovered a cousin for him. He was full of praises of ycu."

"Yet it was not my act; I was but an instrument in the hands of Providence to bring a long-abused little girl to a loving mother. I feel thankful for it, for I have pitied the poor child so long, and until lately have hardly had a chance to befriend her as I wished to do. But now she is safe. It will be heaven on earth to her, this change."

"I should think so. By the way, would you not like to visit her this morning?"

"No, sir, not till afternoon. Then, if you will spare me a little while, I would like to keep my promise, and go to see both mother and child."

"Take the time, Miss Hattie, and any time you desire, with pleasure. I have instructed the foreman in consequence of the nature of your new work, you are to be entirely unrestricted, and no account of time kept with you, though your salary goes on."

"Oh, Mr. W——, you are too kind!"

"No, Miss Hattie, and do not consider me so. The new duties you perform are more valuable to us than you conceive. So consider that it is the firm, not yourself, under obligation."

Hattie understood and felt the delicacy of his thoughts and words, and appreciated the true manliness of his heart; but she could only thank him—all other reward must come from his own consciousness of being kind to her.

Some way, during the morning, he had dropped out his idea of going to California to the foreman, and Mr. Jones, who had of late taken to speaking to Hattie much more often than he had formerly, spoke of it when he came to take some work to the sewing bench, which she had collated.

"To California! Is it not a sudden resolution?" she asked, in wonder.

"Well, may be 'tis on his part. His father did talk of sending me there, for he has long wanted to set up a branch bindery to this on the Pacific coast, but I kind o' hung back. I love my wife and baby, you see, and I couldn't have afforded to take 'em with me; and as for leavin' 'em, I'd rather go down to the paste-bench and work for half wages here."

Mr. Jones was truly a family man, and it is a pity there are not more family men like him.

"When will Mr. W—— go?" asked Hattie.

"Very soon—as soon as he can get off, he told me this morning, but I don't know as I ought to have spoken of it, for he never cares to have his plans known. But I know when I tell you anything it will not get blabbed around."

"No, I shall not speak of it to others," said Hattie.

And now, when the foreman went away, she felt more than ever wretched. Was he going to leave his pleasant home, his dear parents and sisters, on her account?—because she had thrown a shadow on his life?

She could not bear the thought; she was determined to speak to him. So, taking some work in her hand, as if she wished to consult him, she went directly to the office.

"Forgive me, Mr. W——," she said, "if I intrude. But I just learned that you had spoken of going to California."

"Such is my intention, Miss Hattie."

"Oh, Mr. W——, am I the cause of this sudden desire to leave your happy home here—your pleasant business? If it is, let me go away. I will never appear in your presence again. Oh, I am so unhappy!"

And tears fell fast from her dark eyes.

"Dear Miss Hattie, please be calm, and do not blame yourself, for it is no fault of yours. But, believe me, for the present it will be better for both of us that I go. It will help you to forget my folly, help me to bear my bitter disappointment. I would not have you leave here on any account. So long as you are here I can hear from you, know you are well, and—that will be much happiness to me."

"Mr. W——, you are too noble to suffer. Would to Heaven I could save you from it. If you do go to California I will intrust a mission to you which I would not confide to any other man on earth, confident that you will act for me as if you were a dear brother, a true friend, as I feel and know you to be. And in that mission you will discover what I have held as a secret, sacredly, for over three years, and it will help you to blame me less for the disappointment under which you suffer."

"Ah, Miss Hattie, I do not, have not, blamed you. I know your reasons are good. Your noble heart could not bid you act in any way but rightly. I will undertake any service that you intrust to me, fulfill your wishes sacredly to the utmost of my power."

"Thank you, Mr. W——. A letter which I wrote last night, with intent to mail, will be confided to your care. And also written directions where to find the person to whom it is addressed, and other matters which I shall ask of you."

"All of which shall be attended to with faithful diligence, Miss Hattie. And now, please, wash your eyes in the water-basin there before going out. I would not have any one notice you had been weeping."

"You are so good, Mr. W——!"

Hattie's heart was too full to say more. She washed her face in the office basin, and then went out to her table with a lighter heart, bending to her work cheerfully, to do all she could before the carriage came from Mr. Legare's to take her to see Jessie Albemarle and her mother.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE NEW HELP.

Hattie was bending over an old edition of *Don Quixote*, in Spanish, which had been brought up for binding—almost worn out, the cover gone, and the leaves misplaced, when two hands, soft and small, were placed over her eyes, and a voice, disguised, cried out:

“Who am I?”

“Lizzie—I knew you by your rings,” said Hattie, laughing.

“Oh, I stole up so still I thought you’d think it was some bindery girl,” said Lizzie, bending over and kissing her friend.

“No bindery girl would presume to take liberties with me, dear Lizzie. I never mingle with them, though I always treat them with courtesy when chance throws them in my way.”

“I might have known it, darling Hattie. You are not like them, or any one else that I know. I do believe you are a fine lady, just masquerading at work for a secret cause of your own.”

“Time will tell, Lizzie.”

“Well, I only wish it would be in a hurry about it. But come, dear, I saw Mr. W——, bless his heart, when I came in, and he said he had already told you to take time to come to our house whenever you wanted to. And, dear little Jessie, with dress-makers and milliners all around her, happier than anything else alive, only asks for her dear Miss Hattie to come. She has told us how you fed her

when almost starved, and how you gave her clothes when she was in rags, and her mother says she'll pay you in love if she can do nothing else."

"The love of true friends is very precious," said Hattie.

"And we are your true friends, and we will be always," said Lizzie, earnestly. "But come, dear Hattie, they will wait for us. Frank is out in the carriage. He would come along; but when he got here, the lazy fellow wanted to stay in the carriage instead of coming up. He said Mr. W—— was laughing at him for something that happened last night at the club-room, but will not tell me what."

"Most likely your brother was boasting over his new cousin," said Hattie, putting on her things to go.

"Yes, he did tell him about her."

The two girls now went out, and in a few moments were in the carriage, and on their way up town. They stopped but once, then it was by order of Frank, who went into a florist's to get four large bouquets for those in the carriage and at home.

"Oh, my Hattie! my Hattie!" cried Jessie Albe-marle, when our heroine went into the sitting-room, where, with her mother, and surrounded by busy cutters and sewers, she was being made presentable.

And she showered kisses on the only true friend she had known in her many days of sorrow.

As lunch had been kept waiting for the arrival of the carriage and its occupants, the family, as Mr. Legare jovially termed them all, so as to include Hattie, left the sewers and their work, and adjourned to the dining-room.

Jessie, who seemed to come naturally into the

ways of a lady, was almost too happy to eat, but Cousin Frank told her she would never grow large, stately, and beautiful like Miss Butler unless she ate heartily.

It was a roundabout way to compliment Hattie, but Frank, in his innocence, didn't know how else to do it. Some men are so awkward, you know.

"Did Miss Scrimp carry on much after I came away?" asked Jessie.

"She commenced it, but I very promptly hushed it. She said she would like to kill me."

"And so she would if she dared. But she is an old coward, Miss Hattie. No one but a coward would beat a helpless girl as she used to beat me."

"That is true, and were it not for publicity, I would make her suffer for it to the full extent of the law," said Mrs. Emory. "But, Miss Hattie, you ought not to stay another day in that house. Do come here to stay with us. You need never work again. If you will only come and be Jessie's sister you will overflow the cup of joy already full."

"It cannot be at present, Mrs. Emory, though I thank you from my heart. Three years ago I laid out a certain course, for good reasons, which I hope yet to be able to explain to you all, my kind friends, and I cannot change that course until an event, which I hope and pray for, takes place. Then, perhaps, you will think all the more of me for the course I have taken."

"We have no right to ask more, Miss Hattie," said Mr. Legare. "I, for one, have every faith in the purity of your motives in all things."

Hattie could but be pleased with all these attentions.

After lunch the ladies adjourned to the sitting-

room, while Mr. Legare went to his library. Frank, with his new ideas of diplomacy, asked Lizzie if she and Miss Hattie wouldn't take just a little dash with him in his phaeton behind his thoroughbreds.

Lizzie had been out with him once or twice, been choked with dust or covered with mud, and she felt no desire to try it again. She said she preferred the family coach and steady driving.

As Frank would not go alone, he hung about the sitting-room, and got well covered with lint while he dodged about among the dry-goods.

Jessie, who had never possessed a nice dress, was in ecstasy with everything they showed her, and Mrs. Emory had a double joy in seeing her dear child so appreciative of everything done for her. And the girl told such funny stories about Miss Scrimp and Biddy Lanigan, mimicking them so drolly, that she "brought down the house," as the critics say.

Hattie spent a very happy afternoon, dined with the family, and was then sent home in the carriage as usual. It was just supper-time at Miss Scrimp's when she got to the boarding-house, but the old spinster was at the door when the carriage stopped, her eyes fairly green with hate and envy.

Had not Saturday night been so close at hand, and the money for the silk dress expected, there is small room to doubt she would have had a "pick" at Hattie in spite of the fear in which she held her. As it was, she said, as Hattie passed her:

"Some folks ought to feel terrible proud to ride in other folks' carriages. For me, I'd rather go afoot, when it's my own shoes I walk in."

Hattie made no reply, but she paused to say a kind word to some of the girls who were coming in. At

the same moment her eyes fell on the new servant whom Miss Scrimp had hired to replace Jessie, for she could not get another girl from the asylum. Her record was already against her there.

This girl had just come over from the "Faderland" far away. She was young and small, but stout-built, and she thundered around on wooden shoes, much to the amusement of the girls, as they came in. She had not a very good idea of American ways, spoke no English, and Miss Scrimp and Biddy Lanigan had to manage her by signs.

The secret of her employment was this: She was got from an intelligence office on a quarter of the going wages, because she wanted to learn the English language, and how to act as a waitress.

Hattie, having dined so late, did not care for supper, so she did not stay to see Marguerite essay her first trials at carrying round tea to the boarders, nor did she know until after supper that the new girl, stumbling as she carried two cups of hot tea in her hands, deposited the contents of both down the scrawny neck and bosom of Miss Scrimp, who, screaming with pain, attempted to box her ears, but got the worst of it in the struggle, for the girl tore off all of Miss Scrimp's false hair, and left her almost bald-headed, besides damaging the arrangement of the pads, which made up the best part of her form. So Miss Scrimp learned that she had not poor, helpless Jessie Albemarle to deal with now. And as she had engaged this girl for a month, she dared not discharge her without paying her wages, so she drew off to her room to repair damages, and left the new girl and Biddy to wait on the table.

And they managed better without her, for the girl was willing and good-natured, and, after her

first mishap, was more careful. Biddy, who had got a hint from the girls that she was to have a dress out of the proceeds of the subscription, bustled around, and between her and Germany, as she called the new girl, the supper ended pleasantly.

There was enough on the table, and the food was good. Miss Scrimp had got started in it, and did not dare to advance backward.

CHAPTER XXXII.

“SHE IS DYING!”

Hattie was engaged that night, until a late hour, over her writing-desk. A letter which she had already written, enveloped, sealed, and stamped ready for mailing, was opened, a long postscript added, and then it was sealed with wax, and from a tiny seal in ivory an impression was made—an anchor and a cross, signifying Hope and Faith.

Hattie wept over this letter, and, after she had sealed it, took up the mountain sketch we have alluded to, and looked at it long and tearfully. Then, with a swift, skillful hand, she copied this sketch on a smaller scale on the head of a large letter-sheet. Then, taking three letters from envelopes, which all bore the pierced hearts as a seal, of which we have spoken several times, she read them over and over, and taking one, copied a portion of it beneath the sketch which she had just completed.

“If he will undertake the mission, by this Mr. W—— can be surely guided to that ‘Mountain Home,’ and if all is found, as I hope to our Father it may be, his mission will bring joy to a lonely heart, perhaps sweep away the clouds that have so long darkened my path; and then, absolved from my vow, I can throw off the veil that I abhor, and once more among my equals in the world take the place which belongs to me. Surely I deserve it if patience and long suffering ever met a reward.”

It was after midnight, by the tokens of the city bells, when our heroine closed her writing-desk. A brief time over her Bible, a little while at silent

prayer, and then she lay down to rest on her coarse and humble bed, contented with her lot, and not for an instant regretting that she had refused a home of affluence and the fostering care of rich and loving friends.

At early dawn the loud, shrill calls of steam whistles, blown to wake the workers in great establishments, woke our heroine, and she was up and washed, ready to breakfast with the rest at the usual early hour.

Miss Scrimp, with her lean neck bandaged where it had been scalded the night before, sat grim and silent at her post. But the steaks were good and well cooked, the bread soft and fresh, the coffee strong, and all still went on as it had done since Hattie held the finger of fear above the old maid's head.

The meal soon over, the chattering girls wended their way to their various shops, and Hattie, within almost a minute of her usual time, went to her table in the old book-bindery, which seemed almost like a home to her.

Mr. Jones met her with his usual pleasant good-morning as she went to her place, and other hands, whom she knew slightly, bowed; but these were the only recognitions. She had never made any intimacy in all the long months she had worked there.

Mr. W—— came in later, and went at once into his office. Though Mr. Jones kept the time of every hand, Mr. W—— always made out the pay-roll on the morning of each Saturday, and in the afternoon the hands went into the office as called, one by one, and received their pay.

And that had been the custom for the many years that the bindery, first under the father alone, and

now under the father and son, had been kept running. Never, in easy times or hard, had the practice varied—never had a Saturday's sun set with a single one of their employees unpaid. No wonder that good and steady hands remained there, and the best work in all the great city was the result.

Hattie waited until the noon-day hour of rest came before disturbing Mr. W——. She knew it was his busy day, and she also knew enough to respect it.

If others were always as thoughtful many an employee would be saved the sin of hard thoughts and harsh words.

While the people were at their dinners, Hattie took but a little while for her lunch, and with her letters ready, entered the office.

Mr. W—— sat there, looking weary and sad.

"Do I disturb you, sir?" she asked, gently.

"No, Miss Hattie, you come like an angel of relief. I have been working over Jones' time-book, and making out the people's accounts. Permit me to pay you now, so you will not have to come again."

"Thank you, sir."

And she took the money she had earned, and signed the receipt-book, as she had done for months and months, when her turn came, but under far different circumstances.

After this was done, and he had asked Hattie to sit down—for no one else would be called until the dinner-hour was past, and the work call sounded—Hattie took the letters from her pocket and opened her business.

"You kindly consented to undertake a mission for me, Mr. W——. It may be to you a thankless undertaking. Yet, on the contrary, it may be a joyous, gracious work. I have seen so much, suffered

so much, that I have little faith in the reformation of man when he has once yielded himself a slave to appetite and forgotten his mahood. If you follow the directions laid down in a letter I have written to you, you will deliver another letter to a man whom I once believed to be the noblest of his race. He fell, thank Heaven, before I was placed where his fall could drag me down. I would not utterly condemn and bid him go down, down, till he sank forever in the gulf of shame. I wept over him while I drove him from my side, and I prayed to him to go where no one would know him, and there to lead a new life. It was a terrible thing for me to do. I loved that man with my whole heart and soul. You may know some time who and what I was when I thus sent him forth—let it suffice that I was not a work-girl.

“He went. I have never seen him since. But at intervals I have heard from him. It was he who sketched the ‘Mountain Home,’ which you found in my portfolio. He professes to have reformed entirely. He says he is rich. I care not for his gold. But if he is rich in temperance, in virtue, in honor, in manhood restored and truth redeemed, I will keep the troth once plighted.

“To you, dear, kind friend, I confide the task of learning if this be so. I know you will do it without one selfish thought or wish to warp your judgment. And now you see my future is in your hands. Take these letters and the sketch of the spot where he writes he is to be found. There is a secret trail, but the key to find it is in my letter.”

“I accept the mission. Manfully to him and truthfully to you will I carry out your desires.”

“Thank you, Mr. W——. Look over my letter,

and see if it needs any explanation. I will look at the morning paper while you read."

She took up the paper while he read the letter.

Suddenly he heard a gasping cry from her lips. He looked up—she stood, pale and breathless like a statue of despair, with her finger on one of the "Personal" notices in that paper. At a glance, wild and swift, he read these words:

"G. E. L.—If you yet live, come to your mother quickly—she is dying!"

CHAPTER XXXIII.

“MY MOTHER IS DYING!”

“Great Heaven! what is the matter, Miss Hattie?” he cried, as he saw her face turn whiter and whiter, and her tall, graceful form totter and reel as if stricken by a fearful blow.

“My mother is dying,” she gasped, and I far away, with forgiveness not passed between us,” and she sank shivering into the chair from which she had arisen.

And now, in a flash of thought, Mr. W—— remembered where he had seen those initials before. They were on the clasp of the portfolio which held her drawings. Undoubtedly they were the initials of her real name, and all this time she had been to him only Hattie Butler.

“Miss Hattie, how can I assist you? If you desire it, I will escort you anywhere you wish to go, leaving when you desire, waiting for you, and keeping sacredly any secret you may share with me.”

“Oh, Mr. W——, you are so good. Do not believe me wicked, or reveal it, if I tell you that my real name is embraced in those initials—that no wrong doing of my own caused me to hide it under another, but that I sought to escape persistent annoyance on a subject I may not name now—sought to evade a demand which wealthy and worldly parents made of me.”

“Miss Hattie, I would stake my life on your goodness, that every action of your life has been pure, and marked by the noblest of purposes. Now, tell me what I must or can do for you.”

"Grant me leave to absent myself a little while. It may be two or three days—it can hardly be less—it may be longer, and while I am gone, please go to Mr. Legare's and explain to him and his family that I was called away at almost a moment's notice. I must take the four o'clock boat for Boston. I will have time to go to my boarding-house, settle my bill, and then I can take a carriage for the boat."

"May I not escort you there?"

"For both our sakes, it will be better not. I will be safe in a carriage and in the open light of day. Do not fear. And, Mr. W——, I will, when I come back, if you are not gone to California, tell you all. I will withhold nothing from so good, so true a friend. I go to the bedside of a dying mother. That is what that notice calls me to. I will not condemn that mother at this hour. But it was her pride and obstinacy that forced me into a strange city to earn my daily bread."

"Do you not need more money?" asked Mr. W——.

"No, sir; I have enough in bills on my person, and some in bank if I needed more; and I hold Mr. Legare's munificent check for those drawings. I need nothing, Mr. W——, but your belief in my honor and truth—your kind sympathy."

"You have both, dear Miss Hattie—both to the fullest extent. Go, and Heaven shield and bless you. You will surely return?"

"Yes, and take my place here, no matter what occurs. Here will I stay until you return from California, and the result of your mission is made known to me."

"Thank you, Miss Hattie. I will not detain you longer, for you will have but little time for preparation and to reach the boat. This evening I will go

to Mr. Legare's, and simply explain that you were called away by the sickness of a relative."

"Thank you; that will be enough. Tell them I will go to see them when I return."

A grasp of the hand, a tearful good-by, and the honest, noble man, the pure, truthful woman, were apart—he standing gloomily alone in his office, she on her way, walking fast, toward her boarding-house.

Entering that, she found Biddy, Marguerite, and Miss Scrimp all in the kitchen.

She handed Miss Scrimp the amount of her board for the week, then giving her the additional dollar for her silk dress, she said:

"I pay my part of the proposed subscription for the silk dress, Miss Scrimp." Then turning to Biddy Lanigan, she said: "You have always been very good to me, Biddy. Here is a five dollar bill for you to use as you choose."

"Long life an' more power to ye, ye born angel!" cried Biddy; "who could help bein' kind to the likes o' you? Sure there's not a lady in the land can hold her head higher than your own."

"Thank you, Biddy. Now, Miss Scrimp, I am going away for a few days, and shall lock up my room, for I leave my trunk, books, and everything except my little hand-satchel there."

"Sakes alive! where be you a-goin'?"

"To visit a sick relative, and I shall return as soon as I can."

"Sakes alive!"

Those were the last words Hattie heard as she turned and hurried to her room.

Half an hour later she came down dressed in a traveling suit of heavy brown pongee, with a bon-

net and shawl literally worth more than the entire wardrobe of Miss Scrimp, her dress and her bearing that of a lady.

“Sakes alives! Who’d have thought she had such clothes here,” was Miss Scrimp’s exclamation, as her “cheapest boarder,” as she had called her more than once, left the door.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

HATTIE'S SEX DEFENDED.

I don't know why it is that the girls always read those "Personals" in the paper. But I know they do.

The very minute Mr. W—— entered his father's, where he lived with his parents and sisters, his tallest and prettiest sister, Flotie, came running to him with the paper in her hand.

"Brother Edward," said she, "don't you remember the initials on that portfolio of drawings you had the other night—I mean the drawings made by that pretty bindery girl of yours."

"Why, what of it?" he asked, with well-assumed carelessness.

"Why, they're here in this paper. Read this personal: 'G. E. L.—If you yet live come to your mother quickly—she is dying.' That must mean your bindery girl. Anna saw it first and brought it to me, and we had a great mind to send it down to you, marked, at the bindery."

"That would have been folly. There may be a thousand people in the world with those very initials. And, moreover, the initials of the girl alluded to are H. B. Her name is Hattie Butler."

"That may be an assumed name. The initials on her portfolio were G. E. L., for we all saw it and spoke of it at the time you had it here."

"Very likely. Is dinner ready? I'm hungry as an owl. And I've got to go out to make a call this evening."

"What, in the fearful storm that is just beginning to rage?"

"Yes. I do not like the storm—it must be terrible

on the water—but I promised to make a call at Mr. Legare's, and I never break a promise."

"At Mr. Legare's on Fifth avenue? He who has a son in your club, and a pretty blonde for a daughter?"

"Yes, Flotie."

"Well, I wouldn't keep you from going there, storm or no storm. You can go in the carriage. I'd just go wild to have that girl for my sister-in-law. The Legares stand at the very head of New York society. But there's the dinner-bell."

"Mercy! how the wind blows. This storm has come up very quickly—a regular north-easter," said the brother, with a shiver, and there was a very anxious look on his face as he went to the dining-room.

His people always dined late, that they might have his company after the day's business was over.

At the table Edward W—— ate very little. His soup was barely tasted, the fish passed entirely, the "old roast beef" always on that table just apologized to, and he would not wait for dessert at all."

"Why, brother, you said you were so hungry when you came in?" said Flotie, opening her great black eyes in wonder at his abstinence. "Has the thought of that little blonde divinity driven away all appetite?"

"What blonde divinity?" asked Anna, yet ignorant of his destination that evening.

"Why, that pretty Miss Legare whom we saw at the opera the other night. Her father is worth millions on millions, and they descended from a noble French family, I know, just by their looks and the name," answered Flotie.

"Oh!"

And that was all Anna said just then.

But she kept on thinking, and when her brother kissed her and Flotie good-night, as he invariably did on going out, she said:

"If you bring a nice, aristocratic sister-in-law to our house, Edward, I'll love you better than ever, if such a thing can be."

His answer was a sigh, for he was thinking of one who even then was tossing on the angry waves of Long Island Sound.

And putting on his overcoat, with an umbrella to shelter him over the walk, he stepped into his own carriage, which he had ordered out, and gave the driver the number and avenue on which Mr. Legare resided.

He found all the family at home, and met the new cousin, whom he had never seen before. He was warmly welcomed, and as Mr. Legare insisted on his passing the evening there, he permitted him to have his carriage and horses sent around to the capacious stables in the rear of the mansion.

When he told them that he had been sent by Miss Hattie Butler to tell them she had been called away suddenly by the illness of a near relative, and that even then she was on her way to Boston by the night boat, every one of the family joined him in his expressed anxiety about the storm—a wild, sleety north-easter, which could be heard in its fury even inside the marble walls of the grand mansion.

"Alone, without any escort; she'll be just scared to death," said Frank. "I wish I was there."

"You'd be worse frightened than she'll be," said Lizzie. "She is brave—very brave, I know."

"Pooh—she is only a woman, and all women are

cowards when danger is around," said Frank, in his important way.

"Allow me to differ with you, Mr. Legare," said Mr. W——, promptly. "I believe that the female sex, as a generality, have far more moral courage than men. And what is physical courage but that of the brute? Nine times out of ten those who possess it hold it more on their ignorance of danger than anything else."

"There, Mr. Frank Legare, you're answered, and I hope you've got enough of it. Women cowards, indeed! That shows what you know about them."

"Oh, I might know that you'd side with him," said Frank, petulantly. "But that don't change my opinion a bit, Miss Lizzie."

"Frank! Frank! I really thought you were more gallant!" said his father, laughing at the evident discomfiture of his son.

"I might as well give it up since you're all against me," said Frank, in a sulk.

"Oh, I'm not against you, Cousin Frank," cried Little Jessie, running up to him, "for I was the biggest coward in the world to let that vile wretch, Miss Scrimp, beat me, as she often did, when I might have turned on her and scratched her very eyes out."

Frank laughed now. He had one on his side, any way, and that put him in good humor again.

All this time Mrs. Emory had been sitting sad and silent, listening to the storm which raged without. For well built though the house was, the fury of the gale dashing against the heavy plate-glass of the windows, gave a sign of what it must be out on the unsheltered sea.

"Heaven be merciful!" she said, solemnly.

“Heaven be merciful to those who are exposed on this fearful night on the raging deep. God help those who now are battling with the storm.”

“Amen,” broke from every lip. Even Frank looked sad, and he was silent now.

CHAPTER XXXV.

BATTLING WITH THE STORM.

"Battling with the storm." That was the very word. For while those loving friends sent up a prayer to Heaven for her safety, Hattie Butler, unable to remain in her state-room, not afraid, for she was truly brave, but anxious, had thrown a waterproof mantle, which her satchel contained, over her head and shoulders, and gone out on the deck near the pilot house, where, holding on to one of the great iron stays, she looked out on the wildly heaving waters, listened to the howl of the mad gale, and waited, with faith and hope, for the end, whatever it might be.

By the light in the pilot-house, which shone on the pale faces of the two pilots who stood at the wheel, she also saw the calm but stern face of Captain Smith, the commander of the boat, a veteran in the navigation of the Sound, and she felt that he knew his peril, and would do all that man could do to save the lives of those intrusted to his care.

But it is not man who brings, or rules, or allays the storm. The winds are in the hands of the Almighty, and He is able to save when all else are powerless.

She saw the mate pass her and go to the pilot-house door. The captain asked:

"Is all right below, Mr. Glynn?"

"Yes, sir, so far. But it is a fearful night. I never knew the steamer to heave and strain so hard," replied the mate, a tall, fine-looking young man, with

a bare accent, not a brogue, to tell that he was a son of Erin's Isle.

"Have you had the pump well sounded?"

"Yes, sir, I have given orders to sound them every fifteen minutes, and to report instantly if there is any gain in the water below."

"Good! You are the right man in the right place, Mr. Glynn. Tell Bishop, the engineer, to keep a full head of steam on; we need every pound we can carry to make head against this gale. The train at Fall River will have to wait for our passengers or leave without them, if this no'-easter holds stiff till daylight."

"I only hope we'll live it through," was what Hattie Butler heard the mate say to himself, as he crept away toward the ladder to leeward, by which he descended toward the engine-room.

And then she saw the captain go and look at the compass, and say to the pilots:

"Keep her up two points more to windward. We ought to be near enough to Gardener's Island to see the light."

"In this sleet, with the spray dashing as high as the smoke-stacks, we'll never see anything till we are right on the top of it!" growled out one of the pilots.

Was it not a Providence that made Hattie Butler peer out at that moment from the shelter which the pilot-house afforded her from the wind and rain—peer out into the gloom and darkness ahead? It must have been.

For close, very close, she saw what she knew must be an artificial light, for through the inky clouds no star or moon could have been seen.

Quick as thought she sprang to the pilot-house door, flung it open, and screamed out:

"Captain, there is a light very close to us on our left hand. I can see it out here plain."

"On the port bow? Impossible!" cried the captain, but he sprang out to see.

The next second he sprang to the pilot-house.

"Hard up the helm!" he shouted. "Ring the stopping-bell, and then back the engine."

All this did not take a second to say, and as quick as it could be done every order was obeyed.

And as the great steamer came around in water almost smooth, the captain came up and drew Hattie Butler into the pilot-house.

"Young lady," said he, "you have saved this steamer and the lives of all on board. This night my wife would have been a widow and my children orphans but for you. Five minutes more and we would have been head onto the rocks among the breakers! What is your name?"

"Hattie Butler!" gasped our heroine. "Are we safe now?"

"Yes, I know just where we are, and can head my course and make Fall River in the morning, but perhaps too late for the train. If I was worth a million dollars I would give every cent to you, for death and ruin stood face to face to us."

"Captain, I have only done my duty as an instrument in the hands of God. It was He who sent me from the state-room, where I could not sleep, up here, where I could see the light-house when I did."

"Heaven be thanked with you," said the old captain, reverently, and he bowed his head.

"If all is safe now I will go to my room," said Hattie.

“It is. At breakfast I want you at my right hand at table. We will be in smooth water then, please Heaven. I will steady you with my arm as you go below, for the steamer pitches heavily with her head off, as it is, from the wind.”

And gratefully the captain took Hattie down to her room, and then went back to his post.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

SAFE IN PORT.

"Cap'n, that was the closest call I've ever had on the Sound, and I've been on it, boy and man, for five-and-fifty years."

That was what the chief pilot said to Captain Smith when he returned to the pilot-house after he had seen Hattie Butler to her state-room, and taken a turn to the engine-room and forward deck below to see how things went there.

"How on earth did we ever get in so far, with the wind holding where it did?" chimed in the other pilot. "Our course ought to have kept us full five miles farther out."

"There was a stiff sou'wester all the night and day before, and with the tide at ebb it made a terrible current setting out by Montauk. I should have thought of it. I headed well over for smooth water, but not enough to throw us so far in shore, by ten miles, rather than five. I'll never forget this experience. We have over four hundred souls on board, and had it not been for that bright-eyed girl, where would they be now?"

"Who is she, cap?"

"I don't know. She gave me her name. Hattie Butler—that is all I know. She wears the dress, and has the manners of a high-born lady; and, as you saw, though the face was pale then, she is as pretty as pretty can be."

"I was too bad scared to look at her," said the chief pilot. "I'm hardly over it yet. The passengers will make up a purse for her when they hear

of it. If they don't, they don't deserve the luck they've had."

"She has begged me not to tell of it at all," replied the captain; "but I don't see how I can keep my mouth shut. And there are three or four newspaper men on board, and they'd never forgive me if I kept it from them. But I'll not speak of it at the breakfast table to all of 'em, as I meant to."

The steamer was now heading her course, and the wind going down a little, while the rain, that fell heavier than ever, made the sea a great deal smoother.

But the steamer was hours behind, and though Mr. Bishop, the chief engineer, drove the firemen to their work, the steamer could not make Fall River within four hours of the regular train time. But the captain told his passengers at the breakfast-table that there would be a special train ready when the boat reached her wharf to take them right on, and he added that it was better to be late and safe than early and in peril, adding a remark which he credited to his engineer:

"I'd rather get to Fall River six hours behind time than go to perdition on time."

Only the reporters on board knew, and it had been given to them on condition that they should not repeat it there, how near to destruction they had been; and the captain, with manly delicacy and honor, had refrained from pointing out Miss Butler to them as the heroine, thus saving her from the torture of being interviewed.

At breakfast Captain Smith was very polite and attentive to our heroine, but as he was always polite to all his passengers that did not expose her.

At last the noble steamer, much to the joy of all

on board, and of friends and agents on shore, made her port, and ran into her regular wharf.

"Miss Butler," said the captain, "when you return to New York please take passage on my boat, and if you purchase a ticket I shall feel hurt. The complimentary card, which contains my name, will pass you on the railroad at all times, and I want you to think how much I owe you when you do me the real favor to accept it."

He was escorting her from the boat to the cars when he said this, and she could not refuse to accept his card, whether she ever used it or not.

In five minutes more the cars bore the glad passengers toward the city so often called the "Hub"—I hardly understand why.

And now I must draw a sorrowful picture there. In a chamber in one of the most pretentious houses on Beacon Hill, in the city of Boston, a lady hardly past middle age, who must in health have been very beautiful, lay dying.

A minister, two physicians, and several weeping friends were near, and the former was speaking words which he hoped would comfort her, or lessen the agony of that dread moment.

The physicians had endeavored to get her to take an opiate to lessen her pains, which were wearing her out, but she would not, but kept crying out:

"Oh, my daughter! She will come—I know she will come to forgive me before I die. I want all my senses. I want to tell her what I have suffered through my false pride. Her father is dead—died praying that he might only see and bless his child. And must I die, too, without seeing her? Oh, no. God is too merciful. Pray—oh, pray, minister of God, that she be sent to me before I die."

And her white, thin lips moved all the time he knelt in prayer.

And before he arose to his feet, while the others, kneeling, listened and wept, a wild, glad cry broke from that mother's lips.

"She is coming! My Georgiana is coming! I heard a carriage stop at the door. It is she—thank Heaven, it is my daughter!"

How a mother's ear, even when that mother was on her death-bed, could hear what no one else had heard, how she could feel so certain her child was near, is beyond our ken. But it was so.

A minute, scarcely that, had elapsed when the door softly opened, and mother and child wept in each other's arms.

It was a holy scene. No word of recrimination, no breath of the past, only this:

"Mother, dear mother!"

"My child! God bless my only child—my love!"

There was not a dry eye in the room—those who had wept with grief before over a dying friend, now wept with joy to think her eyes had not closed before that meeting—that reconciliation took place.

But the physicians knew that the strength of Mrs. Lonsdale could not last—that the spark so near gone, flashing up, could last but little longer.

And the change began almost before they expected it.

We need not say that Georgiana Emeline Lonsdale was the real name of our heroine, but that was the name of the dying lady's daughter, and that daughter was our heroine.

"Raise me up. Let me look at you. Oh, Georgiana—my dear—dear child!" gasped the mother. "I

prayed but to live for this—and—God has been good. My will—here—under my pillow all the time!”

The physicians pressed forward. With a moan of sorrow Georgiana pressed that wan face to her beating heart.

“Mother—mother—live for me,” she sobbed.

“Bless—blessed—child—thank God!”

“She lives forever in a brighter world,” said the minister, with touching solemnity.

And our heroine, yet clasping that form, so dear that nothing of the past could come to mind, looked down on a smiling face frozen in the still snow of death.

Gently the kind friends removed her clasp, tenderly the good pastor said:

“Blessed is He who gives. Blessed is He who takes away.”

Long, long the poor girl wept, and would not be comforted. What to her was the costly mansion, furnished as few other houses in the city were adorned? What to her a bank account second to few in Boston? What to her, horses, carriages, old family plate, jewels that had been owned generation after generation by her ancestors, now all her own? Her father, ever kind, her mother, with whom she had parted in anger when she chose a heart’s idol, all too early cast down, were gone—forever gone from earth.

It was well her sorrow found relief in tears. She wept until exhausted, and then herself needing a physician, she sank to sleep. She had not till then slept one moment since the night before she started from New York.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

HOW THE NEWS WAS RECEIVED.

Mr. W—— was up and out bright and early that Sunday morning, anxious to see the Sunday papers, daily and weekly, most of which he knew did not go to press till late in the night, or rather early in the morning, and he hoped from these to hear something about the storm on the Sound—something to assure him of the safety of the one who was first and foremost in his thoughts. All that he could find in these papers was that just as they were closing up their columns to go to press a fearful gale was blowing from the northeast, and that disasters on the Sound and all along the Atlantic coast might be expected. But none had been heard from yet. All the Sound line steamers left at their regular hour, and must meet and face the gale en route.

And this was all he could learn without telegraphic news came of sufficient importance to cause the issue of extras. Nervously he watched for these, and at last, not far from noon—a little after it—he heard a street Arab shouting:

“ ‘Ere’s yer extra. ’Ere’s news o’ the big storm!’ ”

He rushed out into the street, tore a paper out of the hand of the yelling urchin, threw him a quarter, and then read the heading in startling capitals:

TERRIBLE STORM!

WRECKS ALL ALONG OUR COAST!

**The Heroism of a Miss Hattie Butler Saves Over
Four Hundred Lives on a Sound Steamer!**

**OUR OWN REPORTER WAS ON BOARD THE ENDANGERED
AND NEARLY WRECKED STEAMER.**

[Full Particulars by Telegraph.]

For a little while he was so blinded that he could not read another word, a mist seemed to come between him and the paper. But in a little time a reaction came. He grew calm, and then he read a long and thrilling telegraphic report of the storm, how the vessel, swept by adverse currents, ran far out of her course, and while battling with a most terrible tempest in a sea which deluged her decks, was on the very point of running on shore, when a young lady who had preferred to watch the wild grandeur of the storm rather than to rest in the shelter of her state-room, had, while clinging to the stays near the pilot-house, discovered the danger neither pilots nor captain could see, rushed to the pilot-house and given the alarm only barely in time to have the course altered, the engines reversed, and the boat backed.

The name of the heroine who had saved the vessel and so many precious lives was Miss Hattie Butler, a passenger going from New York to Boston. Further particulars would be sent by mail, written

out in full by the reporter who had witnessed all that had occurred, and would interview the lady if possible.

"She is safe! Oh, I thank the gracious Father she is safe!" was all that Edward W—— said.

Her life, even though she might never be his, was more precious far to him than his own.

The news was too good to keep. He knew that there were others who would rejoice to hear it. He hailed and engaged a passing cab, and with the paper yet clasped in his hand, ordered the driver to go as fast as he could to No. — Fifth avenue. The more haste he made the better he would be paid.

Any one who knows what a New York cabman is can fancy how those poor old horses were lashed forward under that promise. Mr. Bergh, luckily for the driver, did not see him, and thus in about half an hour Mr. W—— stood on the steps of the Legare mansion, and the cabman drove back at a slow walk with a ten-dollar bill in his pocket, about one-fifth of which would reach his employer's hands that night when he rendered in his day's work.

In a few seconds Mr. W—— was in the library, where the servant told him he would find Mr. Legare, and by the time he got there Frank, Lizzie, Mrs. Emory, and even Little Jessie were in the room, for they had seen him alight from the cab, and feared he had brought bad news.

"Have you heard from Miss Butler? Is she safe?" cried Mrs. Emory.

"Don't speak if she's lost—don't—don't!" screamed Lizzie, for, seeing how pale he looked, she feared the worst.

"If she's dead I'll die, too," moaned Frank.

"She is not only safe, but her heroism has made

her immortal. She has saved over four hundred lives," cried Mr. W——, waving the paper in his hand. "I came as fast as I could to be the first to bring the glad news."

"Oh, you dear, dear fellow!" screamed Lizzie, and she threw both her white plump arms about his neck, and kissed him again and again.

"I don't care if all the world sees me," she added, as Frank cried out:

"Oh, Lizzie!"

And Little Jessie kissed Mr. W——, too, and cried while she did it, and no doubt Mrs. Emory would have willingly done the same if it would have done him any good and been within the bounds of propriety.

Mr. Legare said in his happy way:

"Bless my soul, Mr. W——, you seem to have turned the folks all topsy-turvy, but I don't blame you. The news is gloriously good. I always liked that girl. And, mark me, she'll turn out to be something more than a bindery girl yet."

"You just bet she will," cried Frank. "If I knew where to find her I'd go to Boston to-night."

"What for, Frank?" asked his sister, now completely herself again.

"To tell her you kissed Mr. W—— right before us all," said Frank, determined to get even with Lizzie now if he could.

"You might tell her, too, while you were about it, that I was only sorry he didn't kiss me back," said Lizzie, so saucily that the laugh was all on her side.

"But really, Mr. W——," she added, "you must think I was very bold. But, to tell the truth, I thought at first you had come to tell us she was

dead, and when I heard you say she was safe I was so glad that I really didn't know what I was doing."

"“Oh, that is a likely story, when you were cool enough to notice that he didn't kiss you back again,” cried Frank.

“An oversight for which I humbly beg pardon,” said Mr. W——.

Frank was even now, and Mr. W—— had helped him, for which the young man felt decidedly grateful.

Lizzie acknowledged the victory, for she blushed, and made no reply.

Mr. W—— now read the entire report aloud, and said he had no doubt the fullest particulars would be had in the morning papers.

“Dear me,” sighed Frank, when he heard this, “she will be made so much of now in Boston where live heroines are scarce, that I'm afraid she'll never come back to see us.”

Mr. W—— whispered something to Lizzie, who laughed heartily, and then said:

“Frank, if she only knew you were just dying to see her—you, the heir to millions, and not so bad looking either—she'd never sleep till she got here.”

“Oh, you traitor! you told her just what I said to you at our club-rooms,” said Frank, shaking his finger at Mr W——.

And so Lizzie had the laugh on her side now.

Mr. Legare insisted on Mr. W—— remaining to dinner, and then he would take him home in his own carriage.

Lizzie, with an appealing look, joined in the invitation, and Mr. W—— remained.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

AN IMPORTANT DISPATCH.

When Edward W—— got home that night he found two angry girls up to meet him. His sisters, Flotie and Anna, their dark eyes flashing, each with an "extra" in her hand, met him as he entered the sitting-room in his usual quiet way.

"So! So, Master Ned! you think you can keep a secret from us, don't you?" cried Flotie, shaking the paper in his face.

"Yes; we asked you if the 'G. E. L.' who was wanted to go to a dying mother wasn't your Hattie Butler, and here she turns out a heroine on a Boston steamer. Oh, you hypocrite! you knew all about her going all the time."

"Yes, I'll wager a box of gloves you did," said Flotie.

"Now, own up, and we'll forgive you," said Anna, in a coaxing tone.

"What do you want me to own up, sis?"

"That G. E. L. and Hattie Butler are one and the same," said Flotie. "You needn't deny it, for we're sure of it."

"Well, if it will make you any happier, let it go so."

"And that you knew she was going on that very boat," added Anna.

"If that will set your mind any more at ease, I knew it."

"Then why didn't you tell us last night?" said Flotie, and her big black eyes fairly snapped.

"And why did you leave it just to chance for us to

find it out? We saw you buying an extra, and call a cab, and drive off like mad up town, and we each got one; and so you see you are caught, Master Edward."

"So it appears. Have you done with your catechism? If so I'll go to my room and prepare for rest."

"We're not done yet," said Flotie. "What name do the initials G. E. L. stand for?"

"I do not know."

"Brother Edward, that fib will never do. If you know a part of her secret you know all."

"You are very much mistaken, my sister. I know but little, very little, of Miss Butler or her life beyond the bindery, and the little I do know she has given me confidentially, and so it will be kept."

"Very well, sir. Good-night. You can go to bed without your kiss."

"The punishment is severe, sister dear, but I submit."

And Edward marched away to his room smiling, while his sisters pouted, yet wanted to call him back for the kiss of affection which never was forgotten when they were about to separate for the night.

The next morning Mr. W—— rose unusually early, took his coffee and a slice of toast, and left the house on his way to the bindery before his sisters were up.

He bought a paper at the nearest news-stand, and while riding down town in a street car read a long and well-written narrative of a sub-editor's experience in a storm.

The heroism of Miss Hattie Butler, and the modesty which made her refuse to be interviewed or in any way recompensed for what she had done, was

commented on in brilliant terms. She had done this incalculable service, and then completely withdrawn from notice, and no one knew whither she had gone.

"It was so like her."

That was all Mr. W—— said. But in it he paid her the highest compliment.

He found, on his arrival at the bindery, all who had come, the foreman and a good part of the hands, in a great state of excitement.

They had all seen either the extras of the day before, or got the morning papers. And the question among them all was, was the Hattie Butler alluded to the one who worked in the bindery. None of them, not even the foreman, had known of her leaving town, for Mr. W——, on Saturday night, had not thought it necessary to speak of it, and would not have done so now, except to his foreman, but for the questions of his work-people.

But now, with a pride he had no wish to control, he told them it was their Hattie Butler—that she had been suddenly called away to the bedside of a sick relative in Boston, and that she was on the boat when she played the heroine so grandly.

It was a wonder to see how proud those poor shop-workers felt. That one of their own class, as they regarded her, should suddenly become so famous, seemed like an individual triumph to each of them.

"Is Mr. Edward W—— here?" cried a messenger-boy, rushing up to the door. "Here's a dispatch from Boston—marked private and very important!"

CHAPTER XXXIX.

MR. JONES PROMOTED.

"A dispatch for me?" cried Mr. W——.

"Yes, sir. Here it is, prepaid, O. K., all hunky, and so forth," cried the lad, and as Mr. W—— took the dispatch, away he went, on the run, to deliver more.

Mr. W——, to the disappointment of Mr. Jones and the others, did not open and read his dispatch then and there, but, with a pale face, and quick, nervous step, went with it, unopened in his hand, to his office, and shut himself in. And there he read these strange and startling words:

"NO — BEACON ST., BOSTON.

"KINDEST OF FRIENDS:—Both my parents are dead. My mother, reconciled, died, blessing me. There is a very large estate to receive, and I alone can arrange for its care in my absence, for I shall return to my position, and occupy it until you return, successful or not, from that mission to California. Pardon the suggestion that you go on immediately. You will find me at the bindery when you come back. Keep the confidence I bestowed upon you, especially as to what I send in this dispatch, even from the friends on Fifth avenue. Only say to all I am well, and will soon return.

"Faithfully yours,

G. E. L."

"[Answer.]"

"Wonderful! What a comprehensive dispatch!" murmured Mr. W——, as he folded it and placed it inside his pocket-book.

And, writing this answer, he sealed and sent it at once to the telegraph office:

"G. E. L., No. — BEACON ST., BOSTON:

"Your dispatch received. Every wish expressed shall be faithfully carried out. I will leave to-morrow for California, and return as soon as my mission is fulfilled.

EDWARD W——."

And when the dispatch was gone, Mr. W—— went out to his foreman, and said:

"Mr. Jones, I have heard from Miss Butler. She is well. Her mother is dead. She will remain in Boston a few days, and then return to her duties here. You are at liberty to say this to our people here. To-morrow I shall leave for California, to establish a branch bindery there. You will remain in charge here. Father will come down to see you once in a while, perhaps; but he will not interfere with the work. When Miss Butler returns give her all the time she wishes out of the bindery, and make her duties easy and pleasant as you can. She is a noble girl."

"That she is, Mr. W——. I'm sorry you are going, but I will do my very best while you are gone, and try to keep everything moving brisk and right."

"I know you will, Mr. Jones. I have every confidence in you. I also increase your wages on the pay-roll ten dollars a week in consequence of your increased responsibilities. Miss Butler had better come into the office with her work now, and she will help you with the pay-rolls. I shall leave checks to an amount which will keep you square with the hands, no matter what comes in. If more stock is wanted father will see to it."

"Oh, Mr. W——, you are too good. Ten dollars a week more will make the little woman at home feel as rich as a Vanderbilt."

"So much the better, Mr. Jones. Your baby is

growing, and so will your expenses increase. Go on with everything. I have a great deal to do to get ready—have to go home, and up town to see Mr. Legare, and shall be out most of the day.”

“I’ll do my best, sir, and I think I’ll please you,” said the happy foreman, as he turned and left the office.

Within ten minutes the news had spread all over the shop. There was a little buzz of excitement, but the discipline of the establishment was perfect, and the work went on as steadily and smoothly as ever.

Mr. W—— spent an hour or more over his books and pay-rolls, then he wrote and sealed a long letter, which was to be given to Miss Butler when she returned, and a separate open note, asking her to take a table in the office when she came back, and to help Mr. Jones with his accounts and pay-rolls.

This done, Mr. Jones was again called, the letters handed to him, all explanations made, and then Mr. W—— left for his home to make preparations there, and have a small trunk packed with necessary clothing, and to go up to Fifth avenue to carry the news, which he was permitted to reveal, from Miss Butler, as she was still to be known until she chose to throw off her incognito, and to tell them of his sudden intention to leave for California, to there extend his business.

His own family, having often discussed this trip to California, were not at all surprised at his decision to start at once, for he was one of those prompt, decisive men in business who take things sharply and move without making any noise about it.

His father gave him a little advice, and an unlimited letter of credit.

His sisters wept a little, but packed his trunk

nicely, for though they often had little jars with him, he was a good brother, and very dear to them.

When he had seen to all these things, and knew that he was ready to start on the earliest train next day, he took the carriage and rode up to the mansion of Mr. Legare.

All were at home, and his welcome, as usual, was cordial.

"Any further news from my dear, dear friend?" was the first question that left the lips of Lizzie.

"Of course he has. She'd let him know how she was, before any of us!" said Frank, almost too jealous to live.

"As her oldest acquaintance in the city, perhaps she thinks me the one that she ought to communicate with, especially as her business is with our firm," said Mr. W——, gravely. "But in a dispatch that I received this morning, announcing the death of her mother, and asking a few days longer leave of absence, in consequence, she begged me especially to come up here, tell her friends she was well, and would soon return to New York, and would make her first and only call away from business on them."

"Oh, thank you—thank you, Mr. W——. All read the paper this morning. Frank says he don't know hardly how to begin, but he means to write a romance about it. He is going to call it 'The Angel of the Storm; or, The Pilot's Timely Warning.' "

"That will sound very grand," said Mr. W——, with a smile. "It seems to me I saw a dime novel, published by one of our city small fry, called 'The Angel of the Washtub—a Romance of Soap-Suds and Starch.' It must have sold hugely."

"There you are laughing at me again!" said Frank.

"No, brother, he is only encouraging you in your first literary effort. Every one must have a start, you know, even if it is down hill."

Mrs. Emory came into the room now with Jessie, and the latter ran and shook hands with the friend of her dear Hattie.

Mr. W—— told Mrs. Emory that he had heard from Hattie. She was well, and would soon return, and then, the elder Legare coming in, he broached the subject of his going to California.

Frank's eyes flashed joyfully when he heard of it, for he was, in truth, fearfully jealous of Mr. W——, and he thought if the latter was absent he might stand some chance to win the affections of Hattie, whom he thought he loved more than ever since her heroism had made her famous.

Lizzie seemed sorry, and asked if his intention had not been formed suddenly. But he told her it had not. His father had long desired to have him go, and he had come to the conclusion that the sooner he went the better.

He spent but an hour there with those pleasant friends, and then, on the plea of preparing for his departure, bade them farewell.

CHAPTER XL.

CAPTAIN SMITH.

Hattie—or, as we should call her in her own home, Georgiana Lonsdale—with her force of character, knew that it was wrong to give away to unavailing grief, and with a strong effort she aroused herself to the action so necessary after her mother's death.

The family physician, and the attorney who had done her father's business for years before he died—both old and true friends—and the clergyman also, offered all the aid in their power, and the funeral ceremonies were arranged according to the desire of the deceased lady as expressed in her will, found where she had told her daughter it was, almost with her last breath.

As we already know, Miss Lonsdale, under her own initials, telegraphed to Mr. W—— the moment she was able to think what she could and should do.

After her mother was buried by the side of her father in the family cemetery, Georgiana at once began to arrange everything for an absence again, for a time, from her home. She caused two bequests of her mother, to charitable institutions, to be paid, even before the legal steps of administration were complied with, so anxious was she to carry out her mother's desire.

Leaving the care of the estate to the long tried and faithful attorney, she arranged that with only servants to keep the house in order, and ready for her occupancy when she came, the old housekeeper should remain there. The carriages were stored in

the carriage-house, and the horses all sent off to be kept on a farm near Amherst, which belonged to the estate, the old family coachman going along to take care of them until he should be wanted again on Beacon Hill.

Georgiana took sufficient time for all these details, for she felt at rest in her mind after she received the telegram from Mr W——.

When everything was arranged to suit her, dressed plainly but very neatly in her mourning garments, she made ready to return to her humble position, and to carry out the plans which she had laid down.

Captain Smith, standing by the gangway-plank of his steamer, was surprised one day to see her come on board, and grasping her extended hand, he cried out:

“Heaven bless you, young lady. There’s a little woman who never goes to bed at night now, without a thankful prayer on her lips for Miss Hattie Butler, who saved a loving husband for her. And a girl, almost as old as you, but not half as handsome, and four other children, who have your name on their lips, and who speak of nothing but the hope that they will some day meet you and be able to thank you for keeping a father on earth for them, through the mercy of the Father above.”

All this the captain was saying as he led our heroine to the best state-room on the boat, and told her, too, that there was every promise of a beautiful night ahead, and a fine run.

“You found that my card took the place of tickets, didn’t you?” he asked, as he called the chambermaid to wait on one whom he considered a guest rather than a passenger.

"You'll forgive me, captain, I know," she answered, "when I tell you I gave your card to a poor weeping widow woman whose pocket had been picked in the depot, and who had not even a ticket to come on with."

Georgiana did not add that she gave the poor woman fifty dollars in cash also.

"It was just like you, and I can't blame you. I'd have helped her myself," said the good captain. "It's a kind of a Smith's failing to put their hands in their pockets when they see any one in distress, and not to take their hands out of their pockets empty."

And now, having his duties to perform, the captain excused himself, and our heroine made herself comfortable for the trip.

When the steamer started, our heroine went upon the upper deck to enjoy the air and view, and having asked the captain as a favor not to speak of her being the person who had notified him of his danger on that stormy trip, she felt safe from undue notice.

But she was recognized by both the pilots, who raised their hats when she approached the pilot-house, and presently, when the captain came up, he gave her a chair inside the house, whence she could look and enjoy herself without feeling the cold wind that blew in from seaward.

Had not the captain and pilots, as requested, been cautious, our heroine would have been lionized, so to speak, on that trip, for there was an unusual number of passengers.

There was only one passenger on board who did approach her, and that was the grateful widow whom she had relieved in her dire distress.

CHAPTER XLI.

HATTIE'S WELCOME.

"Sakes alive, here she is! We were just a-talkin' about you, me and Biddy here, for Germany can't talk no more'n a cat to us."

That was the welcome Miss Scrimp gave to Hattie Butler as she opened the door on the morning of her arrival in New York.

"Good-morning, Miss Scrimp," said the latter, in her ever quiet, lady-like way. "I have returned, you see."

"Yes'm, and I'm glad of it. I missed you so much. The girls have all been wild over what the papers said about you savin' so many lives on the steamer. Was it all so?"

"I suppose it was, Miss Scrimp."

"Sakes alive! Have you been to breakfast?"

"Yes; I took breakfast on the boat. The captain insisted on it."

"Well, it's lucky, for the girls did eat so hearty this morning there isn't much left, and it's all cold before this time. There comes Biddy—she's heard your voice."

"Oh, you born angel!" cried Biddy, running up to Hattie and giving her a real, warm Celtic hug. "I've got the new dress all made up—a real warrum one for winter wear, d'ye see. The mistress has hers, but it's silk, and I'd rather have mine twice over. Shall I get ye's a real nice cup of coffee? I can make it quick."

"No, thank you, Biddy. I'll run up to my room a

little while, and then I am going up town on a visit. I shall not go to the bindery until to-morrow."

"Why, you're in mournin'! Sakes alive, I didn't notice that till this minute. I was so glad to see you. Who's dead, dear?" asked Miss Scrimp.

"My mother!" answered Hattie, choking down a sob as she started up stairs for her room.

"Her mother! Poor thing! I'll be a mother to her now!" said Miss Scrimp, thinking of that thousand dollar check most likely.

Hattie found everything in her room as she had left it. She had long before had the lock put on herself, and it was one which no other key in the house fitted, or Miss Scrimp might have explored her apartment in her absence.

The young lady remained up stairs but a short time, and when she came out she took an up town street car, and started to see her kind friends, the Legares and Mrs. Emory, as well as dear Little Jessie Albemarle.

When she arrived there, such a welcome met her! Lizzie, Mrs. Emory, and Jessie covered her with kisses. Mr. Legare pressed her hand warmly, and poor Frank stammered and blushed, and hardly knew what he said, though he tried to be very polite, and at the same time very ardent in his expressions of pleasure at seeing her once more.

And he hurried to inform her that Mr. W—— had gone to California.

"One rival out of the way!" he said to himself.

But his hopes went below zero when she calmly told him she knew he was going before she left town, and he had telegraphed to her when he was on the point of starting.

"They're engaged. I know they are!" groaned

Frank to Lizzie, while Hattie was telling Mrs. Emory of the death of her mother.

"Who, you goose?" asked Lizzie. "What are you ready to blubber out a crying for?"

"Ned W—— would never have telegraphed to her all about his going off if they weren't engaged!" almost sobbed Frank.

"Pooh! What is it to us, anyway?"

"To me, who is almost dying for her love—to me it's everything. I tell you plain, sister, if Hattie Butler will not have me, I'll go and enlist as a private soldier in the army, and get killed by Indians, or I'll ship in a whaler, and fall overboard and break my neck!"

"Or swallow a whale like Jonah did," said Lizzie, laughing. "Don't be foolish, Frank. If she'll only love you, it will all come right, and if she will not—why, you wouldn't want to marry a girl without love!"

"No," said Frank, with some hesitation. Then he added: "If she loves him she can't love me. I wish he was dead. Who is she in mourning for?"

"Her mother. I heard her tell Aunt Louisa so a few seconds ago."

"Poor thing! I wish father would adopt her. No, I don't either, for then she'd be my sister, and I want her for my wife."

Hattie now had a hundred questions to answer about the storm, and the steamer, which she did cheerfully.

After dinner Frank had the glory of escorting her home in the family carriage alone—Lizzie pleading a headache, just to give the poor boy a chance to make love to Hattie if he could.

But he never opened his mouth from the time he

left home till he set her down at the door of her boarding-house. He couldn't have done it to save his life. He had caught the love-fever in dead earnest.

CHAPTER XLII.

FOUND.

Mr. W—— stayed but three days in San Francisco. Advertising for a foreman and hands, he was soon overrun with applicants, and had plenty to choose from—good, sober, reliable men. Good materials, too, were plenty to begin with, and in just three days the great “Occidental Book Bindery” of E. W—— & Son was advertised in every paper in San Francisco, and the shop in full blast.

And the same evening Mr. W—— took the Sacramento boat, and was speeding on his way to Oroville, where he was to meet the agent and banker of Wells, Fargo & Co., and take his final departure in search of the “Mountain Home,” which he had seen in the sketch spoken of long ago, and a copy of which was in the letter of instructions which he carried from our Hattie.

From Sacramento by rail Mr. W—— dashed on toward Feather River, and before noon he was at the old National Hotel, with a dozen Chinamen at hand ready to dust him off, wash his clothes, or pick his pockets if the chance came around.

From the polite clerk he soon learned the location of Wells, Fargo & Co.'s office and bank, and in a short time he was in the private office of the latter.

With his letter of introduction extended, he introduced his name, and was met with that cordial,

open-handed, open-hearted welcome which the stranger ever gets in California.

To Mr. Morrison, the agent—a splendid young man—Mr. W—— opened his business, asking if he knew a Mr. Harry Porchet, who was mining on the uppermost claim on Feather River.

“I know all of him that any one can know,” said Mr. Morrison. “He is a very singular young man—ever sad and melancholy, strictly temperate, not even touching wine, using no tobacco, seeking no company. I tried to get him to stay a few days at my home; and once, when he came to deposit his gold, as he does every three months, induced him to take tea with me, where I thought my Sister Annie, one of the most gifted girls on this coast, and a fine conversationalist, might draw him out of his melancholy mood. But it was no use. He was polite and gentlemanly, but he would not thaw, as we say out here.”

“I must find him,” said Mr. W——, with a sigh; for he felt as if he was sealing his own fate as a single man forever, if he found this young man all that he was represented to be, and called him out from the shadow of his gloomy exile into the sunlight of Georgiana Lonsdale’s presence.

“I will get you mules and a guide, for there is no other means of travel when you get into the mountains up Feather River,” said Mr. Morrison; “and, as you cannot start with everything ready, camping fit-out and all, before morning, take tea with me to-night.”

Mr. W—— consented, and when that evening he met the sister of the young banker and express agent, saw and viewed her wonderful beauty, and heard her sing songs of her own composition, ac-

companied on piano and guitar, he thought that if young Porchet could be so blind to those attractions, he was indeed true to the love he left behind him.

The next morning Mr. W——, with an old mountain man for a guide, on a sure-footed mule, with two others in the train carrying provisions and stores, started on the perilous journey.

All day, creeping slowly along narrow trails, now on a ledge barely wide enough for the mule-path, overhanging the wild rushing river a thousand feet below—then pressing through chaparral so thick the animals could just get ahead—now shivering just below the snow range on a wind-swept ridge, then pitching down into a mining gulch full of busy men all grimy with yellow dirt—on they went the entire day long, halting but an hour at noon to give the mules a little barley and themselves a scanty lunch.

That night they camped in a grove of tall sugar pines, a little way back from the river, and over the camp-fire Mr. W—— listened to thrilling stories of what California life was in '49, when every one who came was mad with the greed for gold—when vice and crime ran hand in hand, life only held by the pistol-grip or knife-point, and property held more by might than right.

Early next day they were on the move up stream, now obliged to follow the river bank as near as possible, for the snowy range of the Sierra Nevada rose high above their heads.

At noon they came to a lonely little valley, not two acres in extent, shaded at one end by half a dozen trees and a huge overhanging precipice.

Here two fat, sleek mules fed undisturbed, and as they rode up near them, the guide pointed to a pack

and riding-saddle hanging side by side under the cliff.

"Here we camp. The man I seek is within a mile of this place, but no one outside of him ever went over the trail that reaches his claim, so far as I can learn," said Mr. W——, carefully looking over his map, sketch, and letter of instruction. "I will lunch, and then, leaving you here, try to find him."

The guide assented. He had never been up the river quite so far before, and, old hand as he was in the mountains, he did not want to go any farther.

Half an hour later Mr. W—— left, heading for a black patch of chaparral that seemed to hang on the side of a fearful cliff.

He was gone over two hours, and he came back in a fearful stage of agitation.

"My friend is found," he said. "But I fear that the joy of the news I carried him has killed him. I found him sick—very low. Thinking it would revive him, I broke my news too suddenly. I left him in a death-like swoon, and I could not revive him. Come with me quickly. I will pay you treble our agreement if we can only get him out safe, where I can get medical aid."

The guide did not hesitate a second. He was rough, but all heart. His name was Hal Westcott.

After a fearful climb, which took them all of thirty minutes, the two men stood breathless on the plateau we saw in the sketch in front of the log cabin and above the whirl of milk-white waters.

"I almost dread to go in lest he be dead," said Mr. W——.

The guide pushed forward without a pause.

"Zep! He is worth a thousand dead men!" cried bluff Hal Westcott. "He is sitting up."

He was reading her blessed letter of recall. He was thin as a shadow, white with suffering and hunger, too, for he had been parched and dried up with fever, and had not touched food for days.

"But I am better," he said. "I will live now. I did not care to live till this came."

And he kissed the letter, while tears ran down his thin, wasted face.

The two strong men literally wept over him, while they hurried to make weak broth and boil some rice and water for his drink.

Two days—their mules resting and feeding in the glade below—they tended and nursed him, and watched over him with such care as few suffering men ever got in a bleak place like that.

Then, handling him almost as they would have done an infant, they got him down to the other camp; and they took the gold and his arms and packed them down also, so as to be ready to start for the outside world on the third day.

It would be a long, perhaps a dry story to tell in detail were I to describe that journey out. It had taken W—— and his guide but a day and a half to come in. Yet it was four days after their start when poor Porchet was laid upon a nice cool bed in Belle Vista Cottage, as Mr. Morrison called his home.

And within an hour after, Mr. W—— telegraphed to Miss Hattie Butler:

"I have found him. He is all right—a noble and a true man. I love him as I would a brother. He has been sick, is weak yet, but we will start East in two or three days by the fastest trains. Your ever unchanging and unforgetting friend,

"EDWARD."

He told Harry Porchet what he had done, and the latter said:

"You are only too good. Heaven will reward you for it all, and make you happy."

Oh, how little did he realize that Edward W—— was sacrificing all his hopes of happiness in carrying back to her he loved the man whom she only could love.

Tenderly cared for, and attended by the best physician in Oroville, with good, kind nursing, it was no wonder that the invalid was so soon ready to start out for the East.

Edward W—— went down to San Francisco for a single day, to see that all things went well in the Occidental Bindery, and then returned ready to start eastward.

The very next morning he telegraphed again:

"We are coming. We leave Sacramento on the 10:30 train. All well!"

CHAPTER XLIII.

HATTIE LEAVES THE BINDERY.

It was well for her chance of quiet that Hattie Butler took her place in the office, where none could invade without permission, when she returned to the bindery, for every one wanted to see and, if but for a moment, to speak to the heroine whom the papers had made famous.

Even a reporter, and they are everywhere, heard she was there, and got as far as the office door to interview her. But Mr. Jones bravely stood there, paste-brush in hand, and saved her from the cruel infliction.

And thus she lived on, day after day, until almost three weeks had passed, and then there came to her a telegram from the West.

Oh, what a joyous look came over her face when she read it!

Jones said, when he told the little wife at home about it, that Miss Hattie looked just as she, the little wife, had looked when she stood up in church and promised to be his until death should them part.

"Is it from the boss?" he asked.

"Yes, yes, and such glorious news!" she cried.

"Then he has got the bindery started?" asked Jones.

"He says not one word about the bindery," said Miss Butler, abruptly.

And Jones was left to wonder what on earth the news could be that was so glorious, and yet not a word about the branch.

He was completely nonplused, as a lawyer friend of mine said one day when he wanted me to think he knew Latin.

For a few days more everything at the bindery went on as usual, and then there came another telegram.

Miss Hattie looked exceedingly joyous over this, and now told Mr. Jones that the branch bindery was going nicely, and that Mr. W—— was coming home, and would be there in just seven days if no accident occurred on the way.

And then she told him that she should close up all her work and leave the bindery on the next day. She would arrange his books and pay-rolls as she had been doing all the time, up to the end of the week, and then it would be easy for him to run matters until Mr. W—— was in the shop again.

Here was another poser for poor Mr. Jones. Why should Hattie Butler post off to Boston, as she said she was going there, when Mr. W—— was expected home?

"I thought she set a heap o' store by him and he by her," said Jones, talking it over to his wife. "And now when he is coming back, she puts right out as if she didn't want to see him at all."

"It's a sure sign she loves him—she is bashful like, as I was once," said Mrs. Jones. "You'll see. He'll follow her to Boston, there'll be a short bit o' courtin', and then a grand weddin', and Mr. W—— will come back with his bride on his arm as proud as you was when you kissed me before the parson could get a chance."

And that was all the good woman knew about it.

There was tribulation that night at the supper-table at Miss Scrimp's. Hattie Butler, in a tone of

deep feeling, told all the girl boarders she was about to leave them forever. She called each one to her and kissed her, after supper, and gave her a gold ring, with the name of "Hattie" on it, as a remembrance; and she told them, while she thanked them for their ever kind feeling to her, she would not forget them in the distant home to which she was going. If any of them ever was sick, or in distress, if they would send a note to Hattie Butler, care of Mr. W——, at the bindery, it would reach her, and she would relieve them, for God had been good to her; she was rich now, and willing to serve Him by sharing her riches with those who were in want or suffering.

The girls kissed her, and wept over her. It seemed as if they could not let her go.

For, in those long years, she had won the love of every one who knew her. Miss Scrimp alone excepted.

That "old barnacle" (I got that idea from Roger Starbuck) couldn't love anything but money and—her wretched old self.

Miss Scrimp got no gold ring, but she got her bill in full, and a week over, as Hattie had run one day into another week, or rather would begin by taking breakfast in the morning.

After this scene was over, Hattie went up to her room, got out her well-worn writing-desk, and wrote several notes, which we can judge of when one is taken as a specimen.

That one was addressed to Miss Lizzie Legare. It ran thus:

"DEAR AND KIND FRIEND:—You know there has been ever something mysterious about me—not wrong, yet a something which I could not fully ex-

plain. In another note I have invited your father, brother, aunt, and Little Jessie, all to visit me at my home, No. — Beacon street, Boston, on the seventh day from to-day, at four in the afternoon, to remain there as a guest that night and as long as you will. Darling, I have written at length to you—to the others, extended only an invitation. Mr. Edward W——, his sisters and parents, will also be there, and a gentleman whom you have never seen. Come, darling, come.

“Lovingly,

“GEORGIANA E. LONSDALE, *nee* ‘Hattie Butler.’ ”

Hattie—or, shall we call her Georgiana after this—was on her way to Boston when those notes went out to their several destinations, carrying wonder and surprise to each recipient. Even Captain Smith got one, in which he was told to bring his whole family, and Mr. Jones was not forgotten, nor the little woman and baby.

In the Legare house there was wonder and joy in all but one heart.

“I wonder who the gentleman is whom we have never seen?” moaned Frank. “It’ll be just my luck—there’ll be a wedding; she’ll be the bride, and I’ll be a shadow, standing back like cold beef alongside of hot turkey.”

And there was yet more wonder with Edward W——’s sisters. But they vowed they’d go even if she had been a bindery girl.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THINE FOREVER!

In front of the finest mansion on Beacon Hill, though the chill of autumn was in the air and a northeast wind came cold from over the bay, an arch of hot-house flowers was erected, covering the entrance to the walk, which led up through a yard ornamented with choice works in marble, to the carved door of the house.

On this arch, in crimson flowers, the word "welcome" was visible.

Inside, servants well—even richly dressed—seemed to flit to and fro, and a lady, young and beautiful, robed for that day as richly as a royal queen, moved to and fro, seeing in person that everything was ready to receive the guests for whom the welcome was meant.

The minister, who had been in that house on a sad, sad day, now stood by this young lady's side, looking dignified but happy.

The old lawyer and many other friends was there, and more came along, as the day wore on, in grand carriages, the elite of the aristocratic old city.

And now the hour—four o'clock—was close at hand. Her carriages had gone to the train to meet the guests who had been invited to come from New York—carriages for all.

And she, who had been all this time flushed and excited, now stood pale and nervous near the door. For a roll and rattle of wheels was heard, and a moment later a whole column of coaches dashed up in front of the house.

From the first stepped two men, and, arm in arm, they came under the arch, and never knight of crimson cross looked so happy as did the younger, paler of the two, when he looked up and saw those words.

But they could not pause—others were hurrying on behind and in front. He saw her at the door, and with a wild, glad cry, he was in her arms.

“Georgiana—mine at last!”

“Yes, yes, my Harry, thine forever!”

A moment’s sobs of joy broke on the air, but then, arm in arm, they went on, while an unseen orchestra played a brilliant march of joy and triumph.

And then, in the great parlor, darkened outside, but blazing with light within, without waiting for more than a few words and whispered greetings, before the friends of bright days and the true friends of darker hours, Georgiana Lonsdale was married to the returned exile—to the man for whom she had dared her parents’ anger, whom she had so nearly lost—by his own fault, and who had come back to her redeemed.

Edward W—— stood at his right hand, Lizzie Legare stood by her dear friend, and the ceremony, brief but impressive, was performed. When it was over, all moved out to the banquet hall, and though no wine colored the cloth or tempted man to fall, a more delicious repast was never served.

After it was over, at Georgiana’s request, her husband, noble and proud in his true reformation, told the listening guests the strange, strange story. He, that old attorney’s poor clerk, had met and loved Georgiana, the only child and heir of those rich parents. They had scorned him, for they had higher views for her—drove him from their door. She, in her love and pride, had vowed to be his, and to—

gether they fled to New York, there to be united in wedlock. He, in his too exuberant joy, forgot his manhood, and when they should have been ready to stand up before the minister was too intoxicated to stand.

Crushed and indignant, she waited until he was sober enough to realize what he had done, and then she told him to go forth and never, never to return until his manhood was redeemed, and he could stand a free man before his God, sworn and proven true in the full fruits of temperance. He went. She would not go back to the home she had left, but at once sought employment in the humblest line.

There, dear reader, we found her. You have had the story. It is a strange one, but to a very great extent it is true. And, as a young writer, I can only hope it will do the good I wish it should do. That it will give courage to the weak, hope to the hopeless, for no one is so lost or fallen but that a higher, better life may be reached.

I suppose I may as well tell you, Mr. Edward W—— is now trying to forget his first disappointment in the smiles of sweet Lizzie Legare, and Frank has “gone West.”

THE END.

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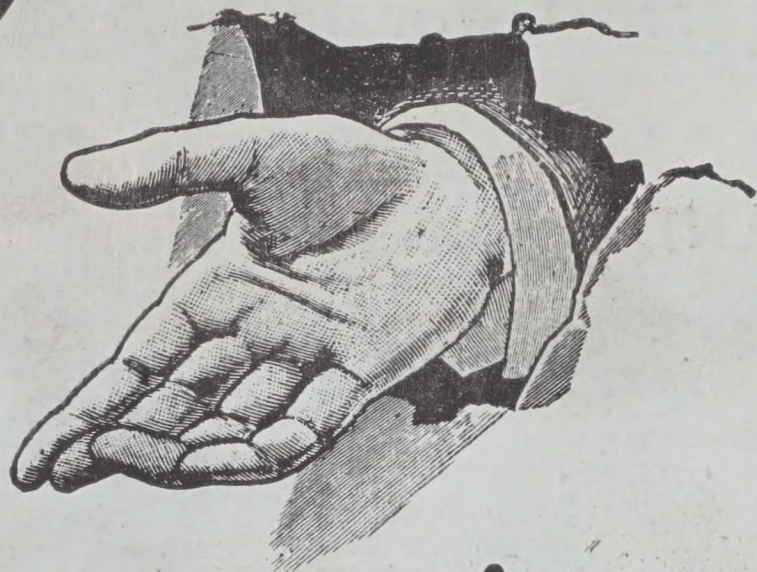
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